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TOWNSHEND  
OF CHITRAL AND KUT





*From the portrait by R. G. Roes.*

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR CHARLES VERE TOWNSHEND,  
K.C.B., D.S.O.

# TOWNSHEND OF CHITRAL AND KUT

*By*  
ERROLL SHERSON

Based on the Diaries and Private  
Papers of Major-General Sir  
Charles Vere Townshend  
K.C.B., D.S.O.

"A Soldier's a Man,  
A life's but a span."  
—*Othello*



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**DEDICATED TO**  
**THE SURVIVORS OF KUT**  
**AND TO THE MEMORY OF THOSE WHO FELL**



## INTRODUCTION



I CANNOT better introduce this life of my cousin, Major-General Sir Charles Vere Townshend, than by quoting an appreciation of his character which his friend Sir James Roberts sent me: "Townshend," he writes, "was just the type of man who under Napoleon became a Marshal of France. Most of them were simple soldiers on whom a military task could be laid with the certainty of performance. Like them, Townshend was eminently a practical soldier. He went from one campaign to another: no British force in his time took the field without him, and in seeking active service on every opportunity he showed that professional courage and devotion to duty which were the great features of his life. I think that he only made one enemy of a serious kind, and his career shows that, given concentration, success is possible. For he concentrated on his profession, and his distractions were few, since he was not what one could describe as being obsessed with games and field sports. But on return from active service he did what young soldiers find such a zest in doing, having a fling in London, and enjoying its amusements with his friends. But if England can find men who will prepare for crises in her history as Townshend did, she need not fear a downfall in the future."

Colonel Repington had also written of him: "He was a cheery companion whom everyone liked, and a fighting Regiment like the 12th Sudanese loved him dearly. So, when all is said and done, and all accounts are written up, Townshend will remain in the hearts and memories of those who recall him in many a long march and desperate fight, in some far-away corner of the world, and they will grieve that

## INTRODUCTION

his soldierly spirit, and a turn of bad luck at the close, never enabled him to attain the summit of his ambitions." In these pages I have attempted to bring to light all the circumstances which Colonel Repington characterizes as "bad luck," for to the day of his death Townshend felt that he had not received justice at the hands of his superior authorities, and the leader of the gallant defence of Kut would ask nothing better than that the full facts of the case should be laid bare.

His career had been brilliant, until the end. Perhaps the fact which militated against his ultimate success was that, as the late Lord Curzon said, he was "unusual." But the only thing about him which can really be called "unusual" was his extraordinary and somewhat un-English capacity for *joie de vivre*. He loved the theatre, and the companionship and *bonhomie* of the theatrical world. He was always ready to sing gay songs to his own accompaniment on the banjo. He enjoyed and could really appreciate a good dinner. He was no mean connoisseur in the matter of wine. He had enjoyed the friendship of many brilliant women. But he had also studied military history deeply, and was an authority on the campaigns of Napoleon, Wellington, Marlborough, Cæsar and Hannibal. Yet in the end, life brought a certain measure of disillusion and disappointment—disillusion, perhaps, as to the value of life's successes: disappointment, certainly, in the non-realization of his highest military ambitions. Be that as it may, he always gained and kept the love and esteem of his men, whether they were the "fuzzies" of the Sudan, the men of Native Indian regiments, or the "Tommies" of his own race. And this perhaps is his chief claim to be remembered in the history of our Army: that he was a great leader, and a fine "fighting" General.

ERROLL SHERSON.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



My grateful acknowledgments are due to many who have afforded me much valuable information regarding various periods in the life of Major-General Sir Charles Vere Townshend: to Sir James Roberts, I.M.S.; to Major Morland, his A.D.C. and companion in captivity; to many other brother-officers and friends who knew him well; and above all to Lady (Charles) Townshend who so kindly placed her husband's Diaries and Private Papers at my disposal, and without whose permission and assistance this book could not have been written.

ERROLL SHERSON.





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TOWNSHEND  
OF CHITRAL AND KUT



# TOWNSHEND

## OF CHITRAL AND KUT

### CHAPTER I

#### EARLY DAYS AND SERVICE IN THE ROYAL MARINES

CHARLES VERE FERRARS TOWNSHEND, afterwards to be known throughout the world as the "heroic defender of Kut," was born on February 21st, 1861. He was the son of Charles Thornton Townshend, and grandson of Lord George Townshend, clerk in Holy Orders of the Church of England, and brother of John, fourth Marquis Townshend. His mother was Louisa Graham, "of Melbourne"—her family having been among the earliest settlers in Australia. They appear to have subsequently moved to New Zealand, where branches of the family are still flourishing in Christchurch and other centres.

Charles Townshend's home must have been a singularly unhappy one, and it will not be necessary to say much of his father who, from the death of the fourth Marquis in 1863, until the birth of Viscount Raynham (afterwards sixth Marquis) in 1866, was heir-presumptive to the title. Thus Townshend was the probable successor of his cousin, since the son of the fifth Marquis was not considered likely to marry. It is necessary to mention these facts to explain why the head of the family always took a personal interest in the education of young Charles, and assisted him in every way in his naval and military career. Without this aid he could not have continued in the Army, for his father had no resources beyond the small salaries of minor Government appointments, or of such posts as clerk in a Railway Company.



In early years the future General lived with his parents in various poor quarters of London. He was actually born in Great Union Street, Southwark, at the time when his father worked in a subordinate position in the offices of the South Western Railway Company. Later the family moved to Hounslow, and later still, to South Kensington.

Charles Thornton Townshend, father of the General, was a martyr to gout, and this may partly excuse his lack of success in life. His son was a lithe and active boy, excellent at cricket and all kinds of games. He seems to have been very devoted to his younger brother Augustus, who was in the merchant service, and was drowned at sea whilst still a mere lad.

At the age of twelve, Charles went to school at Cranleigh in Kent, the expenses being probably provided by his cousin, the fifth Marquis. He left there a year later, on obtaining a nomination for a cadetship in the Royal Navy in 1874. But he was not destined for a sailor's life. For, in 1881 he was gazetted to the Royal Marines, and it is from this date that his career in the public service really began, only to culminate, after nearly forty years of active service in many lands, in the glorious defence of Kut.

Charles Townshend's diary commences in 1884, the year in which he first saw active service as a Lieutenant in the Royal Marines.

It was at the end of the successful campaign of Tel-el-Kebir, and the Egyptian Government were faced with the problems of the Sudan, where it had become necessary to oppose the advance of the newly-arisen prophet Mohammed Ahmed, better known as "the Mahdi." His successes among the credulous and superstitious population of mixed breeds inhabiting the Sudan had been considerable, and it was now necessary to decide whether

to re-conquer the whole of the country, or to evacuate the Sudan, and leave its inhabitants to the tender mercies of the bloodthirsty prophet.

Such was the position when the Royal Marines received orders to provide a battalion for active service. Townshend joined with the detachment from Plymouth, and here begins his diary, which was faithfully kept during whole of the campaign.

*Feb. 9, 1884.* The detachment from Plymouth inspected to-day by the F.O. It numbers about 200 men, and two officers—Major Rose and myself. The men presented a very fine appearance. We embark on the P. & O. S.S. *Poonah* tomorrow, which ship has on board 500 of the marines from Chatham and Portsmouth. Great excitement in Barracks.

*Feb. 14 (Thursday).* Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday a blank. Awful gale in the Bay of Biscay. Most fearfully ill. However, feel quite well at present. Sighted Cape Finisterre 12.30 p.m. Out of the damned bay at last. Everyone is lively as crickets and everyone's appetite most alarming.

*Feb. 15.* We are now in the sunny south. I am sub of the day. Everyone seems to think of nothing but eating on board. For my part, my appetite is simply disgusting. We breakfast at 8, lunch at 1, and dinner at 6, and with no exercise this will play the deuce! I expect I shall turn about 12 stone when we reach Malta, instead of 10.6 . . . I was ordered to bring up my banjo to the smoking room on deck and thus we finished up the evening. Major Rose sang two very good songs.

(This banjo appears to have gone with him everywhere.)

*Feb. 20.* We shall reach Malta to-morrow. All doubts will be solved then. Are we to be sent on to the Sudan, or are we to remain at Malta and eventually be drafted on to Men-of-War ships? Is the war over, or has it really only just begun? These are a few of the doubts torturing us at present. Everyone is most keen to go to the front of course. Moreover, most of us have only brought fighting kits with us, and it will be the very deuce if we don't go to the front after all!

The *Poonah* reached Malta on the 22nd, and there they heard that they were probably to garrison Alexandria and not to have a chance of active service in the Sudan. They were transferred from the *Poonah* to a most uncomfortable transport, a kind of "pig-boat" called the *Gilsland*, and Townshend's description of the passage from Malta to Alexandria will give some idea of the difference between the transport of troops then and now.

*Feb. 23.* Fine weather. Skipper says we shall get to Alexandria on Monday night. This will be my second visit to this ancient city. Our accommodation on board is execrable both for officers and men. The transport is a dirty, small collier; consequently we are crammed like sheep in a pen. The officers' saloon is about eight feet square, hardly space enough between decks to stand upright. Only the senior officers have cabins here. The subalterns have to pig it in horrible bunks made of rough deal planks on the same deck with the men, and separated only by a piece of sail cloth. No baths, no light. It is hopeless to try and undress, so we lie down as we are. What a mercy we have such fine weather! The quarter deck is crammed with all kinds of provisions. Sacks of potatoes, cabbages and carrots litter the

deck in hopeless confusion. Here and there are coops with all kinds of poultry which keep up an incessant quacking. The rigging is hung with rounds of beef and legs of mutton and strings of onions. All we can do in the daytime is to sit about on sacks, curse our fate, smoke till sunset, and adjourn to dinner at 6 p.m. And such a dinner! It simply baffles description. No lack of quantity, but dubious as to quality. In short, our life is loathsome till we reach Alexandria. What is in store for us there, God only knows! We heard at Malta that Sinkat has fallen, that a relief column under Graham has marched to relieve Tokar (42nd, 92nd, and a Battn. of Marines). So much for war news. I cannot help thinking that we shall be sent across to Suez by train from Alexandria, but other fellows pooh-pooh the idea.

At Alexandria they found themselves in the midst of the Carnival Season, a state of affairs which suited Townshend admirably, and directly he could get away he was "down town" with Horniblow, a brother officer, and notes that "carnival in Alexandria is great fun. Masquerading going on in the streets, especially in Rue des Sœurs."

The Battalion was quartered at Ramleh in the Palace of Mustapha Pasha, which Townshend calls "a splendid barracks but in a filthy state." Life here does not appear to have been extra strenuous, and he was generally able to get away with his friend Horniblow to such delights as Alexandria could afford. Both these young men seem to have had a keen eye for a pretty woman! "Horniblow admires every woman he meets who is a European. They are mostly French, very pretty, fine figures and above all, well dressed." While on the very next day the diary records: "The French ladies are

unquestionably handsome and devilishly well-dressed." They lived well also, as regards their food:—

*March 1.* The Club of Mehemet Ali just here (*i.e.*, near the main guard) is very convenient for the Officer of the Main Guard as he can lunch and breakfast and dine there. They gave us a capital dinner for four francs (not counting wine) really very well cooked. It is a great gambling club, I hear. There is a clique of Frenchmen there who play till daylight every evening, playing heavy too. The Khedive stands a breakfast to the officer of the guard, consisting of a cup of coffee and a roll!

But soon they had news that put fresh hopes of active service into their hearts. The Mahdi was reported to have been badly defeated in the Sudan, and it was more certain that General Graham had defeated Osman Digna at Teb, after a most obstinate fight of three hours.

*March 4.* Bridge, Montgomery and myself went out to see the lines of Kufr Dowar erected by Arabi Pasha, about five miles off. We did the thing on donkeys. Names of donkeys, respectively: Diamond, Mrs. Langtry and Osman Digna. We thought the works very well made, but they could be easily turned on either flank. We had an exciting race coming back from Ramleh to Mustapha barracks. Montgomery's mount, Diamond, made the running till about half way. My mount, Osman Digna, then responded to his jockey's call and came away, but was collared on the post, beaten by a neck by Mrs. Langtry. Half a length second and third. (*Note.* The favourite drink of natives is "ahmoutieh," canal-water flavoured with carcases of animals which

have died of bovine typhus with particles of cholera to act as bitters!).

*March 9.* Went in the afternoon with Money and Campbell to the Khedive's gardens on the banks of the canal. All the *haut ton* of Alexandria and Ramleh were there. Most of the girls were very pretty and many of them were Greeks. I hear that the French detest us here. Naturally they are jealous of England in Egypt. The Greeks do not dislike us. The natives simply loathe us; so we are very much to be pitied.

*March 10.* Strolled through Ramleh with Bridge this afternoon. Saw Hassim Pasha's twelve wives out for a walk, with a black slave to keep guard. One pretty little girl among them looked round at us, looking very nice and raising her veil. Altogether they were not a bad looking lot. Two very pretty girls on donkeys. One showed a lot of a very well-shaped leg.

Towards the middle of the month, Townshend seems to have been seized with one of those periodical fits of depression which visited him at intervals during his whole life, and which may be reckoned among the causes of some, at any rate, of his life's failures. He would from time to time come to a conclusion that he was not getting on fast enough, and would seek for a change, regardless of the old proverb that a rolling stone gathers no moss.

*March 15.* I wish that we may be recalled to England now, as there seems no chance of going to the front and getting a medal. I feel completely disgusted and have applied to go to the Indian Staff Corps. We are sent out to Suakin; and instead they shovel us out at Alexandria, and let other regiments go to the front. This is beyond a joke I think, and I must try another service.

*March 16 (Sunday).* Went with Craigie and Money to a children's Fancy Dress Ball in Alexandria given by M. Lozatto, manager of the Franco-Egyptian Bank. The dresses and children were very pretty and it was a great success. Was introduced and danced with several very pretty Turkish girls. Enjoyed myself marvellously.

*March 24.* Start to-night for Cairo, in charge of an escort with ammunition. Left at 7 p.m. in a luggage train, four trucks under my charge, ammunition and live shell and gun cotton. Train went round the city through the desert by Abbasiyeh. This was a lovely view of the city as it lay stretched out below. It looks like a city of candlesticks and inverted punch-bowls.

Lunched with the 79th. Abbasiyeh, where the troops are quartered, has a station on the line from Cairo to Maidan in the desert. Shepherd's Hotel crowded with officers from every regiment and corps in the service. . . . While waiting for the train back to Alexandria, a train arrived from Suez with invalids from Suakin, and Egyptian troops also who had been in Baker's defeat at Teb.

*March 27.* Greek wedding at M. Agglion's, in the Rue Rosetta at 9 p.m. The bride had thirty thousand pounds down as a dowry. The ceremony was in the drawing-room and a ball followed. Very good supper. Am awfully mashed: dreamed last night of a fair mademoiselle with golden hair, such eyes, and *such* a figure!

*March 28.* Ordered to Suakin; but the order countermanded in the evening. Many rumours floating about as to what we are going to do. It seems more than probable we shall return to England. The troops which took part in the Sudan

campaign are on their way back to England. Had a grand encounter with a "friendly" native and kicked him down the steps of the Hotel Beau Séjour at Ramleh.

The Battalion was ordered to proceed to Port Said on the 17th, and Townshend notes:—

It will be my second visit to Port Said, I am sorry to say. A more loathsome place does not exist on the face of the earth. This may mean a preparatory step to garrisoning Suakin, or preparatory to some little expedition. Port Said is unrivalled as a strategical point.

*April 8.* Rumour that we shall not go to Port Said till the end of the month.

*April 10.* The Khamsin, a desert wind, is blowing. One must experience this wind to know what it really is. The air feels like a perpetual blast from a furnace, creating a feeling of enervation and lassitude. Unless the route comes soon, I shall make a fool of myself for about the 50th time. It is a positive nuisance being so inflammable. If the fair P. . . was only English, I really think I should force the running a bit, but being a Greek, one doesn't like to somehow. I suspect the old chap would come down handsome. The General chaffed me the other night, and said I ought to take one of those millionairesses back to England!

*April 15.* Reported capture of Gordon by the Mahdi and fall of Khartoum. Papers are discussing an expedition to Khartoum in two columns, one by Nile in boats, the other from Massouah through Abyssinia. We shall see some service before we leave Egypt yet. Awful night at the Club to-night!



*April 17.* Gordon's capture not confirmed. Have been orderly officer to-day. A lovely night, not a sound to be heard except the "All's well" of the sentries, the murmur of the sea and the calls of the watchmen in Ramleh. Even the cursed pariah dogs are quiet to-night. The picquet from Ramleh has just returned, and having inspected it, I shall turn in. After a long consideration I have determined to avoid my "mash" and chuck up "mashing." I shall only get hopelessly embroiled. No joke getting engaged here, as one only lasts six weeks on an average.

*April 24.* Played in a cricket match to-day: Army versus Navy. The Navy beat us. The principal object, though, was the lunch. We played at Ramleh and the heat was awful out fielding. A slight Khamsin was blowing and no sea breeze. Money and I represented the Marines in the Army team.

*April 25.* Great meet at Mustapha station to-day for a paper chase. Bower of the 60th gave me a mount but my horse ran away with me and I had a devil's own time of it, so saw nothing of the run.

*April 29.* Have heard definite news to-day. The whole battalion, transport, etc., starts to-morrow for Suez by train, there to embark on the *Orontes* and proceed by that trooper to Suakin. It is rumoured that Osman Digna is on the move again.

*May 1.* Passed over the battlefield of Tel-el-Kebir at 5 a.m. Stopped at the station and saw the cemetery. Poor Parkinson, Wardell and Strong are buried here. Reached Kasassin soon after and branched off to Suez, which we reached at 12 a.m. All the way through desert after reach-

ing Tel-el-Kebir. Am very ill this evening. 115 degrees registered.

*May 2.* Suez is a dirty little hole, not even to be compared with Port Said and that is saying a good deal. Am still very seedy and very low-spirited. We start for Suakin to-morrow night. A squall blowing this afternoon and we can see a sandstorm raging in the Arabian desert opposite.

*May 3.* Got under way at 5 a.m. this morning for Suakin. We have the new Governor of Suakin, Captain Molyneux, R.N., on board. Steaming down the Gulf of Suez this afternoon. Straits are very narrow and lofty mountains on each side. Saw Mt. Sinai. We hear dreadful accounts of Suakin. They say a number of bullocks died of apoplexy, which had been sent there from Suez. Osman Digna is threatening the town. None of us expect to see England again, and look upon ourselves as "gone gonners."

*May 4.* In the Red Sea this morning. All canvas set, the wind straight aft. Glorious weather. Punkahs going.

*May 5.* Punkahs and ice. Shall reach Suakin to-morrow. Saw flying fish for the first time in my life.

*May 6.* Ran close along the coast at about 9 a.m. At about 11 a.m. entered the passage and dropped anchor in the harbour at Suakin. The camp of the 60th is close to the water's edge, and all the men crowded down to see us. The coast is very flat with mountains of a lovely purple colour about 24 miles distant, running parallel with the coast. Ross of the 60th, who was at a tutor's with me, came on board. We last met in Regent Street. Everyone in every imagin-

able get-up. Osman Digna is twelve miles away or nearer.

*May 7.* At Suakin. This morning we paraded in marching order at 9.30 and disembarked from the *Orontes* in boats. The flotilla was towed by steam launches, then we steamed up the creek to Suakin, and the battalion was taken on board the *Tyne*, where we are to stay, it appears. Companies for outpost work will go away a week at a time. The climate is so deadly that it will be impossible in a few days to live on shore. The heat to-day is tremendous. The town of Suakin is dirty to a degree. One or two narrow bazaars with mats interlaced overhead, and the usual eastern accompaniment of flies completes the place. The architecture of the houses is very curious and not unskilful in some instances. The Arabs are mostly jet black and the women especially are very fine, and mostly very handsome, with very fine teeth: they are always laughing and very merry. The Arab men are very tall and fierce and, like the women, do up their long hair with camel's dung. The women twirl it into little ropes so to speak, but the men simply plaster theirs down.

Some days later Townshend landed with his company, and after a fortnight of waiting, was transferred to the Mounted Infantry under Major Pigott.

*May 24.* The Mounted Infantry will move into camp next Monday. Osman Digna seems not so keen to attack us now, and the last few days have been undisturbed, although one has to sleep with clothes on and arms by our sides. Spies say that Osman is unable to induce his men to attack us. Queen's birthday to-day. We manned

the ramparts of Forts Carysfort and Euryalus, and fired a salute of 21 guns. The British fired in the harbour. Heat seems getting worse; the perspiration running off me all day. One longs for the evening. From after breakfast it is simply purgatory till four o'clock, when we can get about and bathe.

Townshend's baptism of fire was on May 29th.

*May 29.* Attacked last night by Osman's people. I was in command of Mounted Infantry on Pigott's horse, while Pigott went out with Egyptian cavalry to reconnoitre. Cavalry came rushing back at an awful pace, having deserted Pigott and left him to his fate. He, however, returned by himself and told me he had fired off all the chambers of his revolver at Osman's men who had fired at him. He ordered me to march twenty-five of the troops into Suakin, and hand them over to Colonel Hart at the caravanserai. Which I did. Five of these cowards are to be shot. The gunboat in the harbour turned on the electric light and fired her gatlings at the rebels. We fired our two brass guns about six times from the roof of Pigott's house and the Marines in Fort Euryalus fired their Krupp. Enemy retreated about 3 a.m. It was a pitch dark night and my horse nearly fell down a well. The enemy fired volleys at us, but their bullets went wide. We slept, or rather kept watch, all night on the roof. I have had no sleep for some time now. Moran Effendi, and another officer of the Egyptian cavalry, under arrest for cowardice.

*June 3.* Only a few shots fired at the well fort by the enemy last night. Pigott and I watched the firing from roof of his house. Whilst we were watching a spent bullet whisked over our heads

and fell into the sand—"zap." Our first day's regular scouting with the infantry. We went out about five or six miles on the road to Tamaneeb: scouts reported enemy to us: we advanced and saw a number of natives drawn up in the bush and we dismounted to be ready to fire but they proved to be friendlies under Sheikh Mohammed and they did a war dance for our edification.

*June 20.* Rode down with Pigott to the Custom House this morning and said good-bye. He goes to Cairo, there to England on leave. He hopes to be out here again in the autumn if there is an expedition. He has had a row with the authorities in the E. Army about the running away business on May 29th. He refuses to serve with the cowards. I am very sorry to part with him. Major Woodhouse is my new chief.

Townshend kept up his diary every day, but at this time there was very little to report, save desultory firing at night, and drill by day. But on June 29th some pilgrims arrived with the report that Berber and Khartoum were still safe.

At the beginning of July, he reports that the enemy were getting much bolder and coming closer to the forts at night. He was delighted with the progress made by the Mounted Infantry whom he had been drilling into shape. He never failed to mention it in his diary, when he was pleased with his men.

*July 5.* I hear we have been well reported on. I am most pleased with the detachment of Mounted Infantry under my command. They are all young chaps about eighteen, and are most smart. I have not had to give a single punishment as yet. All I want is to "blood" them now, and they are very, almost too keen to meet the enemy.

*July 9.* Had a great flirtation with my "mash" at the wells this morning. She always gives me a bunch of tamarind for a buttonhole, and I give her backsheesh. Really a pretty girl.

On July 18th they had the first serious brush with the enemy, who had been gradually getting bolder. Townshend describes it at length in the diary.

*July 18.* An affair whilst patrolling. First good brush with the enemy. I left camp this morning by order of Major Woodhouse, in charge of reconnoitring patrol. Fifteen N.C.O.'s and privates of the Mounted Infantry and five troopers of Egyptian cavalry. Patrolled about 7 miles along Handoon road. No enemy visible and returned to water at wells, previous to returning to camp at 7 a.m. Had finished watering when my native scout rode up and pointed out 12 of the enemy's horsemen about one mile off. At once started in pursuit, sending on in front Corporal Whiting, Darbyshire, my groom, and a trooper of Egyptian cavalry to keep touch with them. An exciting chase ensued. The three men mentioned got up close and fired at Arabs, who returned it. One Arab was lagging behind and they tried to kill him. The two mounted infantry dismounted to aim better. The trooper tried to ride round in front and turn him, but the Arab rode at him full speed, fired at about 12 yards away, and the Egyptian fell from his saddle shot through chest. The Arabs turned and speared him, but at once fled on seeing us (the patrol) from within 800 yards, coming up at full gallop. When we came up the Egyptian was dead and awfully mutilated. I continued the chase for about nine miles, our horses were quite done up and we could not get up to them, and again we could not manage to

hit a man from the saddle. I lost them in a large thicket, and then suspected an ambushade, which in fact I had been led into. I collected my men and had commenced my homeward march when my advanced scout returned to report large numbers of camel men coming down in front, and shortly I found myself about eight miles from Suakin, horses done up, and quite two hundred camel men barring my road. I fired a biting fire on them, and this had the effect of making them dismount when about 400 yards, and their camels lay down. The Arabs then rushed on us in extended order with rifle and spear, keeping up a lot of fire, and many were the shaves some of us had. Providence seemed on our side. Directly I saw them leave their camels, I made up my mind what to do, and gave the order: "Cease Fire! Sections, Right! Gallop!" And away we went round their left flank, thereby getting round their rear, and outmanœuvring them. I opened fire on them again from about 500 yards range. They were very much disconcerted; some remaining on camels, some on foot. We now had a running fight for three miles, as I had to retreat directly they tried to turn my flanks—which they continually endeavoured to do. During the retreat we picked up and brought off the body of the dead Egyptian trooper. Darbyshire carried it in front of him in the saddle. They desisted in their pursuit, and returned towards Handoon again. A regular crowd of everyone who possessed a gee was at the wells to meet us! Woodhouse, the Governor, Colonel Ozzard, *tout le monde* and old Mahomed Ali with about 1,500 friendlies. My official report has been sent on to Cairo to Commander-in-Chief, and my name has been brought before Sir John Hay. Report of native scouts says we killed 12 of their men. One

camel with its load of men was seen to come down under our fire by some of the men.

*July 23.* One of Osman Digna's spies was hung in the cavalry camp this afternoon. Three of his accomplices were brought out, and had to watch the proceedings, but were reprieved at the last minute. These men came here disguised as pilgrims, and had been with Hick's army in the Kordofan. In their confession, they admitted that their object was to take back provisions to Osman Digna and gather news. Egyptian troops were drawn up around, and Colonel Haggard did sheriff. This is the first man I have seen hung, and he died without a kick and hung there till sundown.

*Aug. 10.* Found out it was Sunday by finding the Post-office in Suakin closed when I went for my letters. Report says that an expedition is certain. I only hope it may be true. Reports also say that Osman Digna is breaking up fast, but all the same I hear that some of his men calmly walked into a garden, only 200 yards from our fort and bagged all the dates!

*Aug. 16.* Have applied for a Commission in the Cavalry. I don't think for a moment I shall get it, but Woodhouse is going to back me up by a good recommendation, and I only hope it will succeed. Have also written to Lady Townshend\* about it.

*Aug. 21.* I am most anxious about my commission in the cavalry. It will be the turning point in my life. Instead of becoming an exile in India I shall see my proper amount of foreign

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\*Wife of the fifth Marquis. *Née* Lady Anne Duff, daughter of the Earl of Fife.



service and be in the finest service in the world (Cheers!).

*Aug. 29.* Went out patrolling towards Handoon. Mohammed Hamed was my scout. He dunned me for English beer on the way back. He told me he loved girls very much and English beer also, but didn't know which he liked best—probably one was as good as the other.

*Sept. 1.* The mine on the right exploded in the morning. Nine of Osman Digna's men were found blown to pieces. A most horrible sight. Rode out in the evening on the Tamaneeb road, where the bodies of the men who had been blown up were chucked down as a warning to others. They are about 2,000 yards from the left water fort and the sight was most horrible. Crowds of vultures sitting all round croaking at me as I rode up—and the silent bush around.

*Sept. 13.* It is said that Mahmoud Ali has given battle to Osman Digna and that he and his Amaras got rather the worst of it, yet everyone says Osman Digna is on his last legs.

*Sept. 16.* Mahmoud Ali has come in. He has fought a second battle and killed sixty of the enemy. Himself lost 14; among them being his own son. Great to-do in town with dancing in the native quarter.

Rode out on a camel with an N.C.O. of the Camel Corps to-day. Am getting quite an expert camel rider. The Arabs of the Sudan use camel men as a sort of mounted infantry, and they never fight on camels.

*Sept. 18.* Mahmoud Ali reports another victory over Osman Digna. I think Mahmoud Ali a damned old scoundrel. Report that Lord Wolseley

is coming out here. Mail in. *Pink 'Un*, but no letters.

General Freemantle, who had always been extremely nice to Townshend, informed him that he ought to stay at Suakin where he would soon have a chance of distinguishing himself. On the next day he received an official intimation from Marine Office that they would not entertain his application for transfer to the cavalry, and almost simultaneously he was informed by Colonel Ozzard that he had been named as one of the officers to join the Camel Corps expedition.

*Sept. 26.* Dined at Fort Euryalus and made a night of it—banjo and all. Colonel Way and Captain Edge are also to join the Camel Corps. We practise camel riding every afternoon.

*Sept. 30.* Feast of Bairam. Much tom-toming. All the good Moslems of Suakin are evidently on the bend! Everybody in review order. It is like Christmas day at home. The Egyptian soldiers are excused all duty and are feasting to an alarming extent on mutton.

*Oct. 1.* The detail of the officers for the Camel Corps is entirely changed except that my name is still in the summary . . . the whole thing seems unaccountable and purposeless. It simply shows what a state the Corps of Marines is in if, when the officers are detailed by the D.A.G.: the Admiral in command of the Mediterranean fleet can alter the whole thing. Again I say, when can I go out to India?

*Oct. 21.* Telegram arrived this morning. Lieut. White and myself start to join Camel Corps next Friday by S.S. *Loch Aid*.

## CHAPTER II

### SUDAN: THE DASH ACROSS THE BAYUDA DESERT

AFTER many contradictory messages and much uncertainty, a final order was received by the contingent of Marines detailed for duty with the Camel Corps to sail for Suez *en route* for Cairo, and the journey up the Nile towards Khartoum. For the Government at home had at last decided that a firm effort must be made to extract General Gordon from his dangerous position. The expedition was on a fairly large scale. Lord Wolseley was in command—Redvers Buller, Earle, Herbert Stewart, Burnaby (of the famous "Ride to Khiva") and others who afterwards mounted high up on the ladder of military fame were included. The Guards provided a big portion of the men on camels, and the most elaborate preparations had been made to ensure success. But after a certain amount of procrastination and delay at home, the whole expedition, as everybody knows, failed by a few days only.

Townshend kept his diary throughout these momentous days.

*Oct. 24.* Embarked on board S.S. *Loch Aird* for passage to Suez, with baggage and the trusty North at 7.30 a.m. this morning. White is also going with me to the Camel Corps. The General and everyone came on board, and we got under weigh about 11 a.m. Good-bye Suakin! I had a last look at the place from the bridge and have no wish to see it again.

*Oct. 25.* We are well on our way up the Red Sea this morning. Lovely weather. The passengers

on board are Major Peck, R. E., Hon. F. W. Stopford, Grenadier Guards, General Freemantle's A.D.C. who has had his second dose of fever and is on his way to recruit health in Cairo, a naval doctor from Massowah, White and myself.

The sea is as smooth as a millpond and I find the change very pleasant from Suakin. We have about thirty sick Marines *en route* for Suez hospital.

*Oct. 28.* Anchored in Suez dock about 2.30 p.m. We all went up to the hotel by train, and then White and I went to the Marine Camp and drew Bedford cords and a "red-kersey" (Camel kit). Dined at mess at the camp and took the banjo with me.

*Oct. 29.* Off by the 9.15 a.m. train for Cairo. Beastly hot and dusty railway journey. Reached Cairo about 5 p.m. Drove to Shepherd's Hotel where we are putting up. Stopford is staying at General Stevenson's. Tremendous crowd at dinner to-night. English women of course here, as they are everywhere.

*Nov. 1.* Steaming up the Nile. The Post Boat is an old rickety paddle steamer beastly dirty and capable only of about 4 miles an hour. The bath-room is awful and the water can't be changed at once. The feeding is wretched and for this we are charged 8/- a day. I enjoy the Nile scenery very much. In some places we steam along the foot of precipitous sandstone cliffs, and then along alluvial valley lands. Saw several temples in the faces of cliffs. Ran on a mud bank this afternoon, but got off directly. We find it most cool, in fact too cool. The sunsets are grand.

Have great hopes of catching up the Camel

Corps at Assouan, or at any rate before they reach Wady Halfa.

*Nov. 3.* Passed Karnak to-day and caught a glimpse of the ruined temples; but we were unfortunately at lunch and could not spare time to stare at ruined temples on the river bank. Stopped for the night; Kekewich of the Buffs, White and myself rambled about an old mud town in the moonlight.

*Nov. 5.* Assouan. Arrived here about 9 in the morning. Everything in the utmost confusion among the different camps. The Camel Corps are here with the exception of the Marines of the Camel Corps, who will arrive to-morrow evening with the 19th Hussars.

*Nov. 7.* White and I joined about 11 a.m. this morning. Camp pitched in a palm grove near the bank of the river. Hard at work all day drawing stores and provisions at the Ordnance Stores. All our tents pitched by the afternoon, and mess tent put up. We have no end of potted meats and soup, jams, etc., so our mess is not so bad after all. We are awfully comfortable in comparison with life in the rest camp. Dined to-night with Marriott of the Egyptian Army. Very good feed.

*Nov. 9.* Leave Assouan. Suddenly off in charge of 40 men to proceed by dahabeah to Wady Halfa. Remainder follow to-morrow. Left Assouan by rail and reached Shallul a few miles above first cataract. Marched on board the dahabeah. Drew 25 days' rations and sail to-morrow. The men sleep on deck with an awning over them. I have the deck-house to myself. I have given up half of it to the N.C.O.'s mess. My old groom in the M.I. is looking after me. My servant North has been left behind with fever in hospital, at Assouan. I

expect we shall do the trip in 12 days to Wady Halfa.

*Nov. 14.* Woke up this morning and found we are still sailing along a wooded bank. Poe about a mile astern and Pearson not in sight. Sailing close under precipitous cliffs several dahabeahs in single file. The native canoes are of a hooked shape similar to those used at Suakin.

Expect to reach Korosko this morning. Have just passed a body of Mounted Infantry and Egyptian cavalry escorting Camel Company. Arrived at Korosko about 12.30 p.m. No assistance available for towing, so we all go towing the whole afternoon. Pearson and I took our turn. Am completely knocked up.

*Nov. 15.* Started towing again at 6 a.m. Pearson and I stopped for men's breakfast at 8 a.m. Don't think much of Korosko, a dirty little mud village enclosed by steep black coloured hills. Egyptian cavalry and infantry are stationed here in an entrenched camp. Start again about 9 a.m. Passed the dahabeah with the 46th on board, who were also towing. Pearson and I walked along the banks all the way, covered with palm trees and fields of dourra, and every now and then the water wheels making their peculiar droning noise. There are plenty of villages along the banks, about three hundred yards inland. Just as we appeared in a village there was a great rush among the women who were promptly locked up in their houses by the men till we had passed. The Englishman is evidently looked upon as a sort of buccaneer. They have plenty of eggs, dates and sour milk in these villages. We were just making fast our two dhows for the men to have dinner, when a breeze sprang up; all on board, up sail and away! I anchored at sundown.

I write this about 10 p.m. The men have just gone to sleep tired out with the towing this morning. We are close by a water wheel which keeps on humming and creaking.

Have had to doctor a man named Unwin to-day who had a dose of fever. Have given him one quinine pill and some Liebig.

*Nov. 19.* Wady Halfa. Reached Wady Halfa about 3 p.m. and having reported myself to the station Commandant, Colonel Duncan, I received orders to march my men into the camp of the Heavy Division of the Camel Corps. The Guards arrived on camels this afternoon, all great bearded men looking more like Cossacks than anything else. I saw one pitch down his saddle on one side and throw his rifle about five yards on the sand and then sit down and light his pipe. 'These Life Guards evidently don't understand their rifles. Our men are by far the smartest here as we almost all shave and keep up pipe-clay.

*Nov. 20.* This place reminds me of Suakin. The camp is pitched in a desert of soft sand. Boatloads of soldiers continually arriving. No news from the Front. Post in. Three *Pink 'Uns* for me. Awfully hot, makes me feel very seedy.

*Nov. 22.* Took over 87 of our camels this morning from Brocklehurst of the Blues, who is in charge of them here. Rather a small lot. Hard at work all day in the sun, and it will be so, as long as we are here. I find our men are awful grumblers on fatigue duties. Marines, I think, want a very strict C.O. and plenty of punishments served out, but of course on active service this cannot be done. No news at all from the Front. We hear that the infantry are only doing two miles a day in boats and have an awfully hard time. Rumours are rife that Gordon is a prisoner and that Khartoum has

fallen. We fitted 20 men's saddles to-day. The 19th Hussars left for Dongola this morning. A correspondent of the *Western Morning News* is always hanging about this camp and is a great nuisance. He came up to me and said he meant to keep us before the public. Damn his impudence!

*Nov. 27.* I was run away with on a camel this morning! The brute bolted out across some railway lines and heaps of bricks. The marvel is that he did not come down. Shall start this afternoon with Marriott of the Egyptian Army, and ride off to Shakespeare's camp about twelve miles off and return about breakfast time to-morrow. Baker of the Navy (brother of Sir Samuel Baker) came and inspected our saddles this morning.

*Nov. 28.* Enjoyed the moonlight ride with Marriott very much. We started about five and arrived at the camp at the head of the Cataract about 7.45. Dined with the English officers of the 2nd Egyptian Regt. and slept afterwards in the mess tent. Breakfasted off a box of sardines and glass of whisky at 6 a.m.

*Nov. 29.* We were inspected yesterday in marching order by Sir Evelyn Wood who expressed himself pleased. The men looked very well in their new red-kerseys and pipe-clayed helmets and bright spikes. Our mode of carrying equipment is as follows:—1 tent d'abris between two men, two rugs, 100 rounds of ammunition, bucket, waterproof sheet, water bottle (leather). Water bottles infantry pattern, covered with skin, and saddle bags. It is in orders that we march on Monday next for Dongola. First Christmas cards I have seen this year, sent me by Audrey Ridsdale.\* Awfully good of her, thinking of me like that!

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\* Grand-daughter of Lady Audrey Ridsdale, nee Townshend.



*Dec. 1.* We march to-morrow morning. The 50th, the old half hundred, are here formed up on parade and band playing. How lively to hear a band again. It makes me feel awfully homesick. Orders arrived this afternoon to march off to-morrow morning. White and ten men with heavy baggage will go on to Sarras by train and wait for us there.

*Dec. 3.* Sarras. On march again about 8.30 after a bathe by moonlight in the Nile. A most awful march. We lost our way in the desert among the hills. Two divisions and myself were left by the others, who branched up a valley. However, I regained them at Sarras, where we encamped for the night. The Artillery also lost their way and I passed them on the road.

*Dec. 4.* A lovely dip in the Nile this morning. We march at 2 this afternoon across 8 miles of desert and will march all night. The battery of artillery and ourselves marched from Sarras, halted for two hours in the desert and then commenced our night march across the desert to Ambigol. A most fatiguing march, but a lovely moon and wild and rugged scenery. It was very pretty to see the long line of camels in single file winding in and out of the hills, and our whole party could not have taken up less than two miles. We reached Ambigol 3.30 a.m. and laid down as we were.

*Dec. 5.* Up again at 6 a.m. Numbers of Nile boats going up with soldiers.

*Dec. 11.* On the march at 7 a.m. this morning. I find bivouacking has its drawbacks. Everything is full of sand and all kinds of insects crawl over one, and if you don't pitch your tent d'abris you find it very cold towards morning. Camels are awfully liable to sore backs—much more so

than horses. The same desert to march through and then strike the river in the evening, when we halt at a village about two miles south, our camp pitched in palm grove on the river bank. Here we saw an old man weaving with a very curious old machine.

*Dec. 13.* On the march at 7 a.m. A most hot and dusty march to-day. The sun was scorching, and my nose and cheeks are in a dreadful state and shaving is very painful. It was a 22 miles' march to-day, across the desert of the same black boulders and the black low hills. We are only 37 miles from Dongola and we are going to do it in two easy marches. We hear Wolseley has gone on beyond Handek. The R.A. had to shoot one of their camels on the march this morning.

*Dec. 15.* Marched with the R.A. at 7 a.m. The road from here to Dongola is through a vast plain of hard sand. Halted at the village of Argo. Plenty of eggs, milk, etc. Sheep for dinner to-night! My banjo had a narrow shave to-day. The camel on which it was carried fell down dead from heat, without any warning. However, through Providence, the banjo escaped!

*Dec. 18.* Marched at 5.30 with the R.A. and halted for breakfast at a large village on the banks of the river, where we got abundance of eggs and milk. We finally halted by the river again at 5.15 p.m., having done about 30 miles. We cross the river at Handek to-morrow, about twelve miles off. Our men are great grumblers and do nothing but growl and complain. I am simply disgusted with them. There are too many old soldiers with us. Had a good swim this evening. I swam down the river with the current.

*Dec. 19.* Handek. Start at 6.45 with the first

and second divisions in front of the remainder of the R.A. Arrived at Handek about 12. Handek is the most imposing-looking town after Assouan on the river march, much more so than Dongola. The Light Camel Corps caused a block and we were not able to cross at once. We shall be delayed for two days. The camels have to be shipped (without any contrivance, but by bodily lifting them into the boat) with great trouble and annoyance. On the one side of the river not a single bit of shade, not a tree; on the other are splendid palm groves with the camp pitched in them—which is very tantalising for us.

A glance at any map of Egypt or the Nile shows that about twenty miles above Metemneh the Nile makes a pocket of land about forty miles square before resuming its normal course to the north, so it was decided to take the short cut across the Bayuda Desert, rather than follow the Nile, since every hour saved might mean the rescue of Gordon.

*Dec. 30.* The troops formed up on the edge of the desert at 3.30 this afternoon under the command of Sir Herbert Stewart. We then marched past Lord Wolseley who is reported to have said: "The first scene of the last act, and may it end well!" One or two artists were hanging about, sketching us as we marched into the desert, and Carlo, our Maltese cook (who would never be left out of anything) disguised himself as a bugler, and marched past Lord Wolseley with the rest! We halted at 6 p.m. for tea and continued to march by moonlight. Owing to so many mishaps to the loads among the baggage camels we had to halt frequently during the night. One halt lasted half an hour while a sick man who was missing was hunted for. He was found some way in rear

and strapped on to a "cacolet" (a sort of litter carried by camels). When any pack fell off a came the cry of "halt in front" was carried along till the bugle sounded the halt, and "all right in rear" were the words carried along when ready to advance again.

*Dec. 31.* The column halted at the entrance of a gorge, the men being allowed to take two pints of water from their skins, and long grass being cut for the camels with sword bayonets. The beasts had been previously fed with 4 lbs. of dourra grain. The outward march was continued at 3 p.m. and at midnight—the last moment of the old year—"Auld Lang Syne" was sung from front to rear whilst on the march, the effect being very fine. The air was quite still and the long column presented a weird appearance in the moonlight.

*Jan. 1, 1885.* At 1 a.m. we reached the wells of El Howeyiat. Here we halted and slept on the ground in our accoutrements. There was very little water in these wells, and *that* was muddy, Sentries had to be placed over the water skins. We halted at midday for the men's dinners. A ration of one pint of water to each man was served out, and there was a good deal of grumbling among the men. This was most irritating as the best means possible were taken by the officers, and the men seemed to have no idea as to the necessity of economising the water. That pint of water had to serve for everything until the next day, when we hoped to reach the Gakdul wells. None of us had washed since leaving Korti, and one felt very dirty. I always managed to save a little tea in my pannikin for shaving purposes. The scouting of the 19th Hussars was admirable. Whenever we entered one of the many defiles, the Hussars on their hardy little ponies could be seen

topping the ridges of the hills on either side for half a mile. Our men did not bear their fatigue well. I should have thought that the Marines acclimatised at Suakin would have outstayed the Guardsmen fresh from England. But it was exactly the other way. Nine of our company fell out to see the doctor to-day: no Guardsmen fell out. However, when it came to actual fighting our men were "all there": they then upheld their old reputation.

The force reached the Gakdul wells the next morning, and occupied the valley. The country round there is beautiful, consisting of great plains covered with mimosa and scrub, bounded by rocky mountains and in some places appearing so fertile that it is hard to understand the absence of water. With one or two exceptions the wells along the route hold but little water, and that is generally muddy. On occasions, a couple of pints of this muddy liquid after having been used for washing purposes by eight or ten people would be greedily drunk by the pack animals. Yet, flocks of gazelle and other animals lived in the desert, some half domesticated, and tended by the robber chiefs and other nomads who make it their home.

The actual wells are really reservoirs of rain water in three tiers, one above the other, and are filled in the rainy season when the surrounding gullies become raging torrents. The lowest pool of all is the largest and is supposed to contain two years' supply of the average demand. The animals drank there, so the second pool, ten feet above, was reserved for cooking and drinking use. This pool was almost inaccessible, the cliff sides rising to about 90 feet above the water, and a bucket and cord being necessary to get at it. Eight feet above the second pool was another one quite inaccessible.

*Jan. 2.* The whole of the Camel Force—about 2,000—were watered to-day, and as only one or two could be got to the pool at a time, it was a tedious business. The Guards Camel Regiment, in which I was serving, was left to hold the wells and construct two forts covering them, while Sir Herbert Stewart went back to Korti to escort the Sussex Regiment across. We made ourselves as comfortable as we could at Gakdul. The mess was very jolly and my banjo proved useful! The outpost duty was very severe. Going about stumbling among the loose rocks was no joke, and our boots were soon cut to pieces, till at last we tied pieces of leather round them to answer the purpose of sandals. We heard later that the army of the Mahdi occupied the wells of Abu Klea 50 miles away, all the time we were at Gakdul, and that, getting tired of inaction, they were actually in motion to attack us at Gakdul, when their advanced scouts saw us advancing, and that decided them to retire and give battle at Abu Klea.

*Jan. 12.* Sir Herbert Stewart returned with troops and stores, and we were ordered to advance on Metemneh the next day. About seventy dined at mess that night, among the guests being Lord Charles Beresford, Sir Herbert Stewart, Colonel Burnaby, etc. It was the last good dinner for many of them.

*Jan. 16.* On approaching the pass which leads to the wells of Abu Klea, the cavalry reported the enemy in force, and in position near the wells. Major French\* of the Hussars, had a narrow escape from being captured as, rounding some rocks, he rode into a group of Sudan horsemen.

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\*Afterwards Sir John French in the Boer War. Created Earl French of Ypres during the Great War.

We all felt glad at the chance of a fight, but most of us never believed that they would be so formidable as they turned out to be. In the evening we found ourselves in a rocky *wady* with long grass and hills on each side. We halted and formed a *zareeba*, and one of the heights on the left was occupied by some of the Mounted Infantry. On the other side, however, some hills about 900 yards away were occupied by a yelling mob of the enemy's rifles popping away at us, at first with no effect; but when they got the range their fire was very galling. We were very hard up for water and the men were suffering agonies of thirst. Some of the reserve supply was issued to the men. But we were all impatient to occupy the wells and satisfy our thirst. As soon as it became dark orders were given that no light should be shown. Notwithstanding this a man would light his pipe now and then: shouts of "put that pipe out" then brought a volley from the enemy. The fire all night was harassing, and the discomfort much increased by the incessant beating of tom-toms which kept us all on the alert. I was told off with one company to support the Hussars where the *zareeba* was weakest. The tom-toming got very close, and there was no moon, so we could only judge their distance by the sound.

*Jan. 17. Battle of Abu Klea.* At daybreak the enemy's riflemen (who were hunters from Omdurman and armed with Remington rifles) got our range to a yard, several of our men being hit. I soon saw these Sudanese were different marksmen from the men near Suakin. About half-past eight Lieut. Lyall of the R.A. was carried past me, shot through the back. Lieut. Guthrie, attached to the transport, offered to take his place and was afterwards mortally wounded when the Arabs

broke our square. One of the officers of the staff, Major Dixon, was knocked over with a shot below the knee.

By nine o'clock in the morning, Sir Herbert Stewart had formed his plans. We marched out of the *zareeba*, in square, towards the wells with fixed bayonets, all the camels except those required for ammunition being left behind, and an escort left in the *zareeba*, to guard the wounded and the convoy. Directly we left the *zareeba*, the enemy got our range, keeping up a ceaseless fire with deadly effect. A private in my company was the first of the Marines to be hit. He was shot through the chest, rolled over, tearing the ground with his hands and died almost immediately. The cries for "Stretcher" rapidly increased. Tommy Atkins does not like to be inactive under a heavy fire: nothing is so trying both to the patience and nerves of the men, and we all became very impatient to have the fight settled. But a movement in square is necessarily a slow one in order to preserve formation. We scarcely went a snail's pace and were further impeded by the wounded and the camels in the centre of the square. Every now and then the square would halt, lie down and fire volleys.

A man named Mees, who had been in the Mounted Infantry with me at Suakin, made a beautiful shot. A few of the enemy's horsemen were galloping down from the hills to fire from cover nearer to the square. Mees threw himself down, adjusted his sight and loosed off at about 800 yards: we saw one of the Arabs bowled clean out of his saddle, and the horse galloped off, while a bundle of white remained on the ground. Lord St. Vincent of the 16th Lancers was shot close to me: he was hit in the thigh and jumped up in the air, falling on his side.



About an hour after this, we saw on our left front, about 800 yards away, a host of red, green and white banners, marking the masses of the enemy's sword and spearmen, who were advancing slowly towards us in two long lines. Hardly had our square halted and fronted on a small knoll, than the enemy's lines broke and came rushing at us in a disorderly mass. Some of the Mounted Infantry, out skirmishing on our left, ran hard for the square: several of them were overtaken and cut down by the Arabs, who came on without any noise, bending down to avoid the fire now opened on them from the square. Their aim was badly directed and too high. The sailors ran out with their Gardner gun, but it jammed at once. They tried to get it into the square and an immense confusion ensued. The square became a mob, huddled back to back retreating from the Arabs, who were now among us, cutting and slashing with their long straight swords and stabbing the men with their long spears like so many sheep. The crush was so great that at one time I could not get my arms down to my sides, and remained with sword and pistol up in the air, doing my utmost to keep my feet. Although it was afterwards said that no camel ought to have been in the square, that they impeded us, etc., I personally believe that they were our salvation on that hard-fought day for, being in the centre, they held the square, as it were, together. The Arabs were stabbing even our wounded who lay helpless in the cacolets fastened to the sides of the camels.

Lord St. Vincent, who afterwards died of his bullet wound, had a marvellous escape from death when the Arabs were in the square. One of them stabbed at him with a spear as he lay in a cacolet, but missed his aim and stabbed the camel instead. The beast rolled over on his side nearly crushing

St. Vincent, but protecting him at the same time. At a moment when all seemed lost, the Arabs began to retire amid the deafening cheers of our men. This was due, I think, to the Mounted Infantry, under Pigott, whose right flank was thrown forward thereby enfilading the Arabs. A terrific fire was then poured into the enemy's masses and they were shot down like rabbits. Just then, about five of their Sheikhs came charging our square on horseback. It was a wonderful sight, those five Arabs coming on at a mad gallop, waving their swords over their heads and apparently bullet-proof, as one whole side of the square were firing at them. They were shot down one by one. The last man galloped round the flank about 40 yards from the bayonets and came straight for our company. It was incredible. All the men were blazing at him. When only a few yards from us horse and man came over, a tremendous crash, and neither stirred again.

The battle was won, but the cost had been great. "Khiva" Burnaby was killed by a hideous spear wound in his throat. He was much beloved by his men of the Heavy Camel Corps, many of whom cut the frogs from his "patrols" as souvenirs. Two naval lieutenants and several naval ratings lay close to the Gardner, hacked to pieces. In comparison with bigger wars the total number of killed and wounded was considerable. Perhaps ninety of our men were killed, and over 1,500 of the enemy. Lord Charles Beresford had a narrow escape. He grabbed hold of the spear of the Arab who had thrust at him, but fell on the ground and from that position shot the man with his revolver. After the fight the men were fainting for the want of water, reaching the wells about 5 p.m., where there was an abundance of slightly brackish water. Townshend records in his

diary that before they reached the wells, he shared with Count Gleichen a pannikin of yellow liquid, without enquiring, or caring, where it came from!

He comments on the uselessness of the sword-bayonet:—

We found the sword bayonets were next to useless for fighting purposes, as they are so blunt-headed. The old triangular bayonet goes into a man easily enough, but a sword bayonet requires a certain amount of strength before it will do its work. I saw a big Grenadier Guardsman rush suddenly among the long grass and make for one of the enemy's riflemen. The latter sprung up, but as the Guardsman shortened arms and pointed, knocking over the Arab but not killing him. I then saw him working away at the Arab with the butt of his rifle, going up and down like a pump handle before he succeeded in despatching him. These sword bayonets were useful for cutting grass and nothing else. . . . I am certain many rifles jammed through dust having got into the breech blocks. In our company we always kept pieces of linen, leather, etc., bound round the breech blocks as guards when the rifle was not required for use in action: but we Marines were the only ones who used this precaution. Even inside a holster, a revolver would become useless through the fine sand, unless protected by something. I always kept a silk handkerchief bound round the hammer of my own.

*Jan. 18.* A black, a Nubian, deserted from the enemy and came in to us. He spoke Italian fluently, and had fought against the English at Tel-el-Kebir in one of the Sudan regiments. He was afterwards in the expedition of Hicks Pasha, and, escaping the massacre near El Obeid, joined the forces of the Mahdi. He was then a sergeant

of the Mahdi's riflemen, and he said about 60 of these riflemen were deserters from the Sudanese regiments in the Khedive's army. He also said that the enemy had numbered about 10,000 at the recent battle, part from Berber and part from the Mahdi's army at Omdurman.

Sir Herbert Stewart's force marched from the wells of Abu Klea for the Nile on the afternoon of January 18th. It was a long and tiring night march. The long grass was in some places up to the men's waists, and they were exhausted from fatigue and want of sleep. Whenever the column halted the men dropped down like logs and fell asleep immediately. At daylight, the British troops found themselves in an immense tract of bush with a view overlooking the Nile, the blue waters of which were clearly discernible. They also could make out the smoke of two river steamers which were supposed, and rightly supposed, to be Gordon's. The excitement was intense. As the bush thinned the town of Metemneh could be made out and swarms of Arabs seen coming out of the town to intercept our road to the Nile. Townshend's diary continues:

We were ordered to halt and form a *zareeba* as fast as we could, and we saw with rage that we should have to repeat our tactics of the previous day and fight, not only to win, but for water and our lives. A breastwork of biscuit boxes and camel saddles was made, but before this was completed and our camels double knee lashed inside the square, the bullets of their riflemen began to sing about us as they crept closer and closer. There was a small rise of ground about 200 yards in front of our square, and hearing Burleigh, the correspondent, point this out and suggest that this should be occupied, I at once asked permission to go and make a breastwork. About half a dozen of

us, officers, and Burleigh ran as hard as we could with camel saddles and boxes to the knoll, piling them one on the other. It was warm work, for their riflemen, only about 400 yards distant, devoted all their energies to us.

The losses of the little British force at this second fight (generally known as the Battle of Gubat or Abu Kru) were much more severe than on the previous day at Abu Klea. Sir Herbert Stewart was mortally wounded, the command devolving on Sir Charles Wilson. Cameron, correspondent of the *Standard*, was killed as he was eating sardines seated behind a camel. Many camels were killed. This march to the Nile was a dangerous one. Each man carried 150 rounds of ammunition—50 in the bandolier, 40 in the two pouches and the remainder stuffed anyhow in the haversack and trouser pockets. All baggage were left behind, even the greatcoats.

Not a man would have reached the Nile had not the enemy foolishly charged us. Their riflemen were all round us in the bush, and the sand-hills were blackened with sightseers from Metemneh: they would have become very active if we had been defeated! These crowds of people who had come to look on reminded me of field days at Portsmouth. It was about sunset when the rush took place, and on they came as they did at Abu Klea. We opened fire, the men beginning without orders. The charge of the Arabs seemed to melt away under it, and not a man of them got nearer than 30 yards to the square. The cheering was tremendous as the enemy, including the spectators from the villages, began to fly in all directions. The wounded Arabs lying about were all bayoneted, for it was found that they would slash at our men as they lay wounded on the ground, and one of our Marines had his

brains blown out by a wounded Arab who was apparently dead.

They reached the river when it was dark, and the men were allowed to go down by companies to drink—a drink which they probably remembered all their lives. They were utterly exhausted after so much continuous fighting. On the following day the troops marched along the bank of the river towards Metemneh, and occupied the village of Gubat, about two miles from the larger town. The wounded were left with a guard at Gubat and the troops marched back to the *zareeba*—a distance of about five or six miles. They had a good breakfast, buried the dead and took away everything, including the camels, back to Gubat. Sir Herbert Stewart, in mortal agony, was carried on a stretcher by two Guardsmen. On January 21st, the troops marched out of Gubat, carried the village of Abu Kru close to Metemneh without firing a shot, and slowly advanced in square on the town, working round to some cotton fields between it and the river.

About this time four large red flags, with the Crescent and Star on each, were seen above the palm trees coming down the river. The rumour ran round that these were two of Gordon's steamers from Khartoum. This turned out to be correct, and soon about 150 of Gordon's black soldiers appeared across the front of the British troops, dragging at two small brass guns and cheering like mad. It was then decided to retire to Gubat. The men were disappointed that an effort had not been made to rush the town of Metemneh, but the movement would have been very risky, and a repulse would have meant annihilation, so it was considered more prudent to "dig in" at Gubat. The fight on the 18th had been a more decisive one than that at Abu Klea and much more morally effective, for having been fought near the

river and within sight of the villages, the whole population of the neighbourhood came out to see it, and having done so must have taken it to heart. It was therefore not absolutely necessary to rush Metemneh at once, and it was most important, before any decisions were made, to endeavour to ascertain the exact position of affairs at Khartoum.

The steamers which had arrived from Khartoum were just ordinary Nile paddle steam-boats, which had been converted by Gordon into very formidable gun-boats, perfectly shot proof as regards musketry, but certainly not shell proof. They were covered with enormous beams and rough iron plates here and there; there was a large fore-castle built up, and another on the quarter-deck. As a proof of what hot work they had seen the funnels were riddled with bullet holes and the beams were plentifully splashed. The crew on board were allowed to bring their families, who lived below and spent a great part of their time kneading and baking great cakes of dourra for their men. The men were armed with Remingtons and sword bayonets: they carried their cartridges in a bandolier worn round their waists like a belt.

Townshend's next experience was to accompany a convoy which started on January 23rd for Gakdul, and reached Abu Klea at midday next day.

The garrison had made a fort with a *zareeba* in which was the hospital. Surgeon McGill of the Guards was doing well, and so was Lyall of the R.A., whom we thought to find dead. St. Vincent and Guthrie had died of their wounds. . . . We remained only two hours at Abu Klea and resumed our march for Gakdul, crossing the battlefield of January 17th. The bodies were decomposing and the stench was very bad. We lived on half

rations during this march and reached Gakdul on January 26th. Some good roads had been made, and one wag had erected a large signboard with "Gakdul Junction" written on it.

After two days at Gakdul the convoy started on their return journey to Gubat, where they were told that Sir Charles Wilson, with three officers and twenty men of the Sussex Regiment, had started for Khartoum, taking with them two of Gordon's steamers and a large force of Gordon's black troops. The other two steamers were employed, one for ferrying purposes and the other mounting one gun; while a "Gardner" was under Charles Beresford, who made several trips up and down stream, shelling Metemneh and Shendy once and again, as if for a pastime.

*Feb. 1, Sunday.* The awful news that Gordon was dead and that Khartoum had fallen was whispered around. We endeavoured to keep it a secret from the men, but they soon heard of it. It was most dispiriting and we now thought that overwhelming forces of the Mahdi might be expected every day as we were, at the most, only three marches from Khartoum. The longer we stayed at Gubat, the more critical became our position: it seemed as if a second Hicks Pasha's expedition was to be enacted.

The news was only too true. Gordon, betrayed by Farag Pasha, was assassinated on January 26th as he left his house. It seemed sad indeed that Lord Wolseley's plans should have been overthrown, and Gordon sacrificed because our force arrived a few days too late. Stuart Wortley brought the news, having come up the river in an open boat during the night. He reported that Khartoum was in the hands of the rebels, that both steamers had been wrecked,



and that Wilson and the remainder of the party were stranded on an island. Hereupon Beresford started with his boat, the *Sofia*, to rescue them. On that trip was effected the most brilliant achievement of the whole expedition. The story is an old one but is one of those "old stories" that will always bear re-telling.

About 40 miles from Gubat, the channel ran about 100 yards from the earthwork, and the rebels had their guns all ready and laid on. Beresford determined to run the gauntlet, but the crazy old *Sofia* could not make more than four knots against the current even at full speed, and the enemy dropped a shell clean into her boiler, just as the steamer got abreast of the earthwork. There was nothing to be done but anchor there and keep up a hot fire with the "Gardners." Six thousand rounds were fired with such effect that not a single rebel dared show his head. It was impossible to sight the guns, which were run out and fired at blank range. In the meantime, a man of the crew named Benbow (but ever afterwards known as "the man who mended the boiler") set to work and succeeded in repairing the damage, so that when darkness fell they began to get up steam. Undiscovered for a little time, some sparks from the funnel betrayed them, and the din and yells that rose from the fort were appalling. They managed to get under weigh and move off without damage, though a hot fire was kept up by the Arabs. Beresford then rescued the party of Sir Charles Wilson from the island, got up four guns from the wrecked steamers, and ran the gauntlet again in fine style on the return journey. He had no doubt that the wrecking of the steamers was due to some treachery, so that when approaching the dangerous channel, he told the pilot that if he got through all right he would give him 200 dollars: but that if they touched anywhere, he would blow out his brains! A pistol at the pilot's head being an

excellent argument, they passed through in safety. Lieut. Vanconet was wounded, and one or two blue-jackets killed. The Captains and pilots of the two steamers were ordered to be tried by court martial; for treachery had raised its head everywhere, and Gordon's black soldiers were no longer to be trusted. Seventeen of them deserted to the enemy while Sir Charles Wilson was on the island, among them being a man of whom Gordon had written: "He is the best Eastern I have ever met: treat him well."

*Feb. 10.* A messenger came in from Khartoum saying that a large force was advancing upon us along the left bank with Krupp guns, and that a smaller force was advancing along the right bank. We then began to dig, officers handling the spade as well as the men.

*Feb. 11.* This morning we observed considerable commotion going on in Metemneh, horsemen leaving the town and riding into the desert. This meant that our convoy was in sight. They came in about 1 p.m. and everyone was delighted to see General Buller and the 18th Royal Irish, as we wanted one or two strong infantry battalions badly. They had marched across the desert on foot, always at the rate of 19 miles a day, and one day did 24 miles.

*Feb. 13.* Ordered to parade with camels for baggage only. So many of these poor brutes had died that we were no longer "cameliers," but had become infantry pure and simple. *Le Camel Corps n'existait plus!* News reached us in the afternoon that the convoy of wounded had been attacked in the bush, and the 18th Royal Irish were sent out in haste in support. But another message came in to say that the Light Camel Corps on its way from Abu Klea to Gubat had turned up in rear of the enemy, just as they had

surrounded the convoy and things were beginning to look serious. The rebels then fled.

*Feb. 14.* The force marched at daybreak from Gubat on its return to Abu Klea and the base. Huge quantities of commissariat stores were destroyed, including 22,000 lbs. of meat, 19,000 lbs. of flour, 3,000 lbs. of biscuits, 900 lbs. of bacon, 800 lbs. of oatmeal, etc., and much brandy, port, whisky, etc. Buller and his A.D.C. rode on ponies with an orderly of the 19th Hussars, who carried a small pennon. We marched 12 miles and halted for the day at 11.30 a.m., making ourselves comfortable, feeding and chatting and smoking as if the whole country belonged to us.

*Feb. 15.* The column arrived safely at Abu Klea where General Buller called a halt, sending on a convoy of about 600 camels, the Guards, Heavies and Gordon's blacks to Gakdul.

*Feb. 16.* We met Colonel McCalmont of the Light Camel Corps on his way to Abu Klea. He told us of General Earle's death, and that 10,000 men were on their way to Suakin under General Graham, and also the sad news of the death of Sir Herbert Stewart.

*Feb. 18.* We marched into Gakdul and found Sir Evelyn Wood and the West Kent Regiment and that the convoy of wounded had not yet left.

The convoy of wounded, with Gordon's blacks and their wives and families, left Gakdul for Korti; and on February 21st the Guards paraded and marched along a mere gazelle track across the hills in single file, reaching the wells of Abu Halfa at midday.

*March 4.* Marched from Abut Halfa 20 miles to Magogah Wells. Plenty of water here, and the men were put in good temper on finding that the

Heavies, who had got there before them, had prepared their tea! General Wood's column arrived from Gakdul, having done 30 miles in 25 hours. Pretty good marching, when one considers the heat, and the road being often of loose sand drift, with only occasional bits of good going!

*March 9.* Reached Korti. Very wearied, and many of the men shoeless. The Nile was a pleasing sight and we stepped out joyfully at the first glimpse of it. Lord Wolseley was reviewing the Nile column when we got in. The Gordon Highlanders looked extremely well (to us, who presented a ragged and toil-worn appearance) in their bright tunics and dark green kilts, as they swung by to the tune of "All the Blue Bonnets are over the Border." On the other hand, the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry were more motley in appearance, some being in grey and some in red. Wolseley addressed the battalion and Colonel Boscawen, telling us that the Queen had written to him expressing the pride she felt in the Guards, and asking him to tell them the message in person. He ended by saying that he hoped to lead them in an Autumn campaign.

Actual fighting was now at an end. The relief force had failed to save Gordon through no fault of its own, and was broken up into brigades stationed along the Nile.

Townshend missed the glamour of the Queen's reception of the Camel Corps, and the review at Osborne. In May he was seriously ill with enteric fever, and was sent down the Nile with a sick convoy. By the time he reached Wady Halfa, dysentery had set in, and he did not reach England till August. He thus missed the satisfaction of marching in with his men, after an exceptionally arduous campaign.

## CHAPTER III

### THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER AND THE HUNZA CAMPAIGN

ON January 15th, 1886, Townshend was gazetted to the Indian Staff Corps. Thenceforward the record of his life is for some time one of ordinary routine garrison work, varied with occasional periods of leave. He was nominally attached to the Central India Horse, but his duties with that regiment were frequently interrupted by staff appointments at Gilgit and elsewhere.

In April he was ordered to go with a party to capture a gang of about 200 dacoits at a place called Kanti. The little expedition was a failure. They surrounded the village, but on entering found about a dozen men "in a miserable state of funk." The place was full of stolen cattle, shields and other loot. The main gang had escaped, much to the disappointment of Townshend and his band, as they had confidently looked forward to a brush with them. Two hundred head of stolen cattle and about 15 scoundrelly Bhils were all they took back to Goonah.

On June 5th he starts on a two months' leave, having to ride 74 miles to get the train at Lalitpur, whence he proceeded to Simla *via* Umballa. While at Simla he heard of the death of his father, Charles Thornton Townshend, who died at Broadstairs, aged forty-nine. The death must have given him food for thought in more ways than one. Perhaps it is for this reason that the diary is blank for a whole month, and then there are constant references to rides with E. H., and many engagements

at the house of a Mrs. H., the result of which is seen in the entry on July 28th: "Engaged to E. H." Dances and dinners follow in rapid succession, but there is no entry of other kinds till October 2nd, when he is on a journey to England. On board the troopship he appears as usual to have been the life and soul of the ship, organising concerts and sports for the men and utilising his old banjo to the utmost. He arrived in London and reported to the India Office, wrote to "E. H.", went to Cheltenham to make the acquaintance of her brothers and sisters, and then left for a holiday in Paris.

A course of Musketry in Hythe followed in May. The entries are technical and refer to his progress in the course until May 28th, when he records:—

Colonel Buller writes me asking if I will take Egyptian Army if offered for two years: have said I will.

But his chief delights were in the Bohemian world of London, and many are the letters passing between him and some of the prettiest members of that world.

In the summer of 1890 he writes the following letter to a friend:—

My very dear L.—I want you and your sister to come to supper Saturday night (to-morrow). Norris will be back and it just struck me I go down to Taplow early to-morrow morning, but will be back in time to dine and come on and see the show. I did not mean to get back till Sunday evening. Now manage this and coax that big sister of yours. Write me a line to York Chambers to say if it is alright, so that when I get back from Taplow I shall find the note and will order supper. What was that message you asked Il Signor Dowsettini to give? He did say something, but as Norris was present I talked fast about something

else. Do come to-morrow night and don't be so stuffy with me.

Ever yours,  
CHARLIE.

In July of the same year (1890) Townshend is at Llanthony Abbey Hotel in Monmouthshire (with a friend) reading up for an examination away from the manifold temptations of Town. His letters from here to the same fair correspondent are amusing enough to quote:—

Llanthony Abbey Hotel, Near Abergavenny,  
Mon.

. . . Here we are, Francis and I, with a fire and pipes and tanglefoot whisky. This is such a funny old place, an old ruined priory and a part of it is habitable, which is the inn. It doesn't do to jump out of bed with too much dash when you wake in the morning, because you may bump your head against the ceiling. Remind L. to send me that photo. I want it so much. What we are to do in this place I don't know. It is among moors, a regular desert. All you can do is to smoke and drink beer and get wet on the moor and fish—nothing else—not a gal to be seen for miles. I wonder what on earth people do here and how they manage to exist. I have no news to give you, write me a line and let me know how you are going on and also the fair sisterhood at the Alhambra: give my kind regards to the fickle one. Francis talked of nothing but her all through dinner (they give us a sort of Harvest Home feeds and pastry you have to use a pickaxe to open). Francis says he is going to write to her to-morrow. Best love.

Ever yours,  
CHARLIE.

The Egyptian Army appointment was apparently temporarily postponed, for Christmas, 1890, found Townshend in Agra, whither he had returned to rejoin the Central India Horse. This course was most probably advocated strongly by Sir Redvers Buller,\* who had always taken a keen interest in Townshend's affairs and tried to keep him steady in one course.

Much of his diary at this time deals with big game shooting:

We have news of a couple of tigers who live a mile or two up the valley among boulders and high grass. Coming here, we all lost our way in the jungles and we all got separated. Another fellow and myself must have gone about 30 miles before we found our way to the river Chambal. I thought I should have died of thirst, as we had no water and could find none. There was a blazing sun overhead, and I had had nothing to eat since two o'clock on the day before, because I had left the camp in the afternoon to wait up all night in the jungle to get a tiger, which did not come! But a splendid panther came, and I shot him through the head and measured him: 8 feet, 8 inches! Well, I was pretty done when I rode into camp at six in the morning, just as the other fellows were starting to ride to this place, so I came with them, feeling pleased about my panther, and then we lost our way and our ponies were utterly done. The Major and myself at last came upon some water in a ditch, and we drank this beastly water with the ponies! Well, we at last got into camp, and after drinking about six whiskies and sodas, we went straight off after a tiger, but he had cut

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\*Sir Redvers Buller was closely connected with Townshend by marriage—his wife being a daughter of the fourth Marquis and therefore a first cousin of his father.



out of the beat, most disgusting! I was very done and got up on the elephant to come home. It is very exciting to sit up all night in the jungle, and hear the different animals about. A water buffalo was tied to a tree and I was in a tree close by. It was one o'clock and I was dozing, I could not keep my eyes open, when there was a rush, and a panther had the bullock down and I woke in haste, fired, and missed him. I was angry, but the moon was hidden at the moment and I could not see the end of my rifle. At three o'clock I heard a big animal creeping up through the grass and he sprang out on to the buffalo and this time I sent an explosive bullet through his brain and he rolled over on his back. . . . Just returned from the river beat. I shot the tiger. As you may imagine, I am very pleased. I was sitting on the ground on a path under a steep cliff, and suddenly I heard a step behind me, and I turned round and there was the tiger looking at me about twelve yards away. Without getting up I screwed myself round and fired, killing him dead with an explosive bullet through his heart. I expect if I had only wounded him slightly, he would have killed me. When I came back all the women of the village came out and sang marching along. There must have been nearly 100 women. I gave them some rupees, or rather my servant did, and he said they were to go to their own "masters." I did not want them.

Meanwhile his correspondence is also kept up with "E. H.", his fiancée. After that, until the summer of 1891 there are no entries in the diary of great interest.

*June 25.* Telegram in the evening from Acting Governor General, Central India: "Colonel Durand applies urgently for services of Lieu-

tenant Townshend at Gilgit, and Viceroy wishes him go at once. Please send Townshend at once and report time of departure."

*July 3.* Start for Srinagar to-morrow, with Stewart of 5th Gurkhas and Molony of the Artillery. Both are ordered up to Gilgit.

Crossed in July several Passes: Tragbal, 11,000 feet; the Dorikun, 13,500.

When Townshend arrived at the little town of Astor on his way to Gilgit, he was informed by Lieut. Manners-Smith, the Assistant Resident, that he and "Curly" Stewart were to have the task of putting a couple of Kashmiri regiments into shape. He describes the situation of Gilgit, the residence of the British representative in Kashmir as follows:

*July 25.* The Gilgit valley is a desert. The road along the river is very bad in places, and very precipitous. On approaching Gilgit, the valley broadens out into a plain; the desert becomes a pleasant land, much wooded, orchards and cultivation and fruit in abundance and many hamlets, and then one arrives at the Fort, which is of considerable size for this part of the world. In fact, Gilgit is known, as Barrow says in his book, as the "Metz of Dardistan." The Residency is a charming little house, the grounds are pretty, and the house very well furnished.

Townshend's charge was the Raga Pertab Regiment, otherwise the 1st Kashmir Infantry, numbering 583 of all ranks. Discipline had become very slack, and according to Durand, there was "much rubbish" in the regiment. He had reported on this regiment as being the worst corps in the command. Townshend had therefore hard work before him, which he tackled with characteristic energy.

*Aug. 14.* Sent for the Adjutant and asked him what was doing in the regiment. It had as yet done no battalion drill, no musketry, no outpost duties nor advance or rear guards—in fact no duties of “detached” order of any kind. Bayonet exercise had never been done, but they do the manual and firing exercise. Saw a few recruits at evening drill, a dirty looking lot. Took the Adjutant down to the range and explained to him many things and how I wanted them done. There is a lot to be done to get the regiment in proper trim for active service in November.

Meanwhile events in Hunza were moving rapidly to a climax. Townshend scents an “affair” and has a joyful entry in his diary.

*September 10.* The Rajah of Hunza, Safdar Ali Khan, has refused to forward letters through his country to Younghusband. It is plain we must occupy Saffy’s country and disarm them. I wish we were marching at once.

This Safdar Ali Khan was a peculiarly blood-thirsty ruffian who in 1886 had murdered his father, Ghazan Khan, and at the same time had poisoned his mother, thrown two of his brothers down a precipice and made away with a third. These sanguinary proceedings did not appear to have excited any astonishment in Hunza; indeed, the murder of his father had been announced by Safdar Ali Khan himself to his suzerain, the Ruler of Kashmir, in the following terms:—

By the will of God and the decree of Fate, my late father and I recently fell out. I took the initiative and settled the matter, and have placed myself upon the throne of my ancestors.

But Safdar Ali had seen the Russians coming

closer and closer, without any effort of the English to stop them, even though they had actually reached territory within the jurisdiction of the Indian Government. All orientals have a supreme contempt for an exhibition of anything like weakness or what they consider to be weakness, and the Hunza Rajah did not believe in the ultimatum sent him by Colonel Durand, to the effect that the Indian Government had determined to keep the frontier open and intact. He replied that he cared nothing for the womanly English, as he hung upon the skirts of the manly Russians, and he had given orders to his followers to bring him the head of the British Agent at Gilgit on a platter! In another letter he wrote:—

I will withstand you even though I have to use bullets of gold. We will cut off your head, Colonel Durand, and then report you to the Indian Government.

Hunza and Nagar are two distinct petty states divided by the river Hunza. They have each their own chieftain, variously known as the "Rajah" or "Thum" or "Mir." It now appeared certain that operations would be undertaken against both. On September 20th a message arrived from Young-husband saying that he intended to stay with Stewart at Kukturuk, a slope of the Kilik Pass in Chinese Turkestan, in order to keep the British authorities informed of the movements of the Russians and Chinese. He also said that the Russians were sending arms to Hunza, and that he should as far as possible prevent a Russian mission from reaching there. However, on the following day came a further despatch to say that the Russians had apparently departed, but it was impossible to say why or where.

On October 18th Townshend reports himself laid up with a cold and fever, but he attended to his

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On December 2nd, the little force surmounted the Khotal Pass and reached Nilt Fort, and the village. This was a very formidable place. The villagers lived inside the fort, which was a sort of rabbit warren of strongly-built stone houses two or three storeys high with narrow alleys in between, the whole surrounded by a stone wall strengthened with massive timbers. This wall was twenty feet high and twelve feet thick, having square towers at intervals. The flat roofs of such fortified villages covered with stones are practically proof against shell-fire, and

the heaviest guns are necessary to make any impression on them. Thus fortified, Nilt was secure from any ordinary attack. The twenty feet wall was surrounded by another wall of about eight feet in height, loopholed for musketry. The ground outside this second wall fell away precipitously on all sides, except at one point leaving a narrow approach to the main gate. On one side of the fort, a steep water-course acted as a trench. The Hunza Nagar men had concentrated the whole of their defensive strength at this spot, and it was soon apparent that it was absolutely necessary to capture the place in a few hours or retire altogether. Also, for another reason, the assault could not be delayed. The enemy had cut off the artificial canal and the place had to be taken before the men could refill their water-bottles. Colonel Durand gave the order to carry it by direct assault, and the issue was uncertain till the Gurkhas were seen pouring into the fort which had been captured literally by a mere handful of men. Captain Aylmer was instructed to blow up the main gate to admit the storming party, and the position was eventually taken by Lieuts. Manners-Smith and Taylor, with their Gurkhas and Dogras who scaled the vertical cliff over 1,000 feet in height, and killed all its defenders. It has been described as one of the most brilliant feats in the history of Indian warfare. But let Townshend's diary speak for itself.

*Dec. 2 and 3.* Marched at 6 a.m. Great delay with baggage over the Khotal. In front of Nilt Fort about 1 fur. and attacked—fort only approachable by a narrow strip of cultivated land. The guns were brought up and shelled the fort at about 300 yards range only, the 5th Gurkhas supported by my battalion gradually crept forward keeping under shelter of rocks and close under



cliff. We got a very warm fire and one or two Ghurkas were hit and one man of my battalion was killed. Colonel Durand, standing near gun, was wounded in the thigh—we lay for a long time among the rocks—and then we suddenly got news that Boisragon with his 5th Gurkhas had got into the ditch and thence into the fort. We then pushed up, receiving a few shots from loopholes, got through the *abatis*, and down into a water course, and into the fort door, which had been blown in by Aylmer with gun cotton:—Several men were found hiding in the houses in the fort—I then got orders to occupy the fort with the Raga Pertab and make defensive arrangements. Our loss equalled three British officers wounded—all severely—viz., Colonel Durand, Aylmer, and Badcock.

Saw Colonel Durand last night, he was looking very cheerful: they got the bullet out at night—slept in fort.

There is no doubt that our position here is as nasty as it can well be. To storm Thol Fort in front of us will necessitate heavy loss from the numbers of sangars in front of us.

Wounded are all to be sent to Gilgit—sent 50 rifles of Raga Pertab to bring in convoy from Chalt.

*Dec. 7.* Orders this evening—we attack Fort Thol to-morrow at daybreak.

I have to occupy the Ziarat with my regiment, when the rest of the force has gone on to assault the fort at Thol, so as to prevent a counter-attack from Mayun. My regiment has now been so broken up by detachments taken from us that I shall only have 56 rifles available to-morrow. Of my officers Williams, who was also Commissariat, has been sent to Chalt, and Duncan, doing trans-

port, has been put with the 5th Gurkhas for tomorrow. Such is the way we have been treated.

*Dec. 8.* This is *the* most awful day I think I ever spent in my life!

We moved off from camp at 4.30 a.m. Got into the nullah below Nilt Fort and waited for daybreak—our guns then got to work on the fort to pound down the sangars on the precipitous cliffs in front. No effect after an hour, and then we got orders to stay where we were as an attack would be made, and there we stayed all day, not being able to get out without losing a lot of men from the fire of the sangars.

*Dec. 9.* A messenger came in from the enemy at Mayun this morning.

The purport of this letter was that Safdar Ali Khan did not want war and only wanted to watch what went on between England, Russia and China. Also that we ought not to think a lot of ourselves because we had taken Nilt.

It was supposed to be simply a feeler, and no doubt the Nagar people are bothering him a good deal. The answer sent back was short and sweet. We shall continue war as long as he shows a rebellious front.

*Dec. 11.* Built a sangar last night without getting a shot fired at us. I had with me Manners-Smith, 30 men of Body Guard, 20 of Spedding's road men, Appleford and McLeod with them, and about 40 bath coolies all carrying sandbags and logs. After getting near the point along the river, I halted the party and went on with Manners-Smith and got around the point over the rocks and down a gully on to the sand in front of enemy's sangars.

Having seen it was practicable for the men, I

left Manners-Smith to watch and went back to fetch on the men. Built the sangar, making it a sandbag redoubt called "Townshend's sangar." The men worked as silently as they could in the shadow of the rocks filling the sandbags and stacking them. The enemy never heard us and we got away about 1 o'clock, leaving a Jemadar and 8 sepoy to occupy it. I was very pleased to get everyone away without a shot being fired.

Am going with Duncan (who has been made Field Engineer) to-night to make another sangar ahead of this.

*Dec. 13.* Last night, Stewart, Boisragon, and Taylor went across the river on a raft with about a 100 men to try and take Mayun. They found a fire in the road, and some men watching, and as it was impossible to leave the road and get across fields and also impossible to get close to the fort without an alarm being given, they abandoned the enterprise and came back. Duncan was fired on while making the river-bed sangar, but luckily no one was hit.

Sent a sketch or two to the *Illustrated London News*.

Changed camp to a place in the cultivated fields farther from the fort.

*Dec. 20.* I write this at Thol. It has been a real day of success.

Thirty picked shots from each corps paraded on the ridge this morning and we fired on the sangars so accurately that they could hardly get a shot back. Manners-Smith and Taylor and 100 of the Body Guard then scaled the cliff (they had been hidden all night in the ravine) and rushed the sangars one after another in a most gallant and skilful manner, as they only had 2 men wounded. Many men were shot by us as they ran

out of the sangars. It was most exciting: and in one sangar Manners-Smith and his men shot down 20 men. As their party swept along the heights the enemy bolted out of the sangars. Then The whole garrison of Mayun bolted. We saw streams of men leaving the Ziarat and going into Thol. We fired long range volleys from the ridge. We advanced about 2 p.m. to take the Ziarat, Thol, and Gulmet. My regiment was the advance guard. 113 of the enemy surrendered to us when we got to the lower sangar.

I thought that only about 15 men would be in it: my surprise was great on jumping down from the roof to find 100 men. They laid down their arms when I told them; my men didn't come in for some 15 minutes afterwards, as the ascent was so difficult. I then went on in skirmishing order, occupying the Ziarat and carried one sangar with the bayonet. We took a very fine flag at the Ziarat, kept advancing on Thol fort by rushes, and having fixed bayonets we rushed in to find no one in it!

*Dec. 22.* Reached Tashol at 4.30 p.m. and halted till 2 a.m., then marching on again to-night to reach Nagar, where the force encamped at 7.30 a.m. The Rajar Zafar Khan has submitted. There has been no more fighting. Safdar Ali has fled from Hunza towards the Pamirs, with Uzzer Khan.

This fort of Hunza had been a robber stronghold for hundreds of years. Though somewhat dwarfed by the huge size of the mountains, it stands out from the rest of the landscape with a formidable air of mastering the whole valley.

The Hunzas and Nagaris had frequently raged little wars with one another, but this time they had joined forces to defy the British. After the campaign, both the little States submitted to become

part of the Indian Empire, and they were given Home Rule and allowed to manage their internal affairs themselves. It may be added here that both States became close friends of the British after their defeat. At the time of the Chitral crisis, the Mir of Hunza and the Mir of Nagar each brought 300 levies and 600 coolies for the relief expedition, in addition to the permanent bodies of levies furnished by each State. Moreover, both Mirs appeared at Gilgit at the head of their men.

Having been appointed Military Governor of Hunza, Townshend arrives to take over his duties.

Crossed the river with my regiment and entered Hunza. The fort was occupied by the Gurkhas under Boisragon when I arrived and Mr. Knight\* was with him. We dined together in the Rajah's apartments and inspected the loot—nothing much of value! Several Russian things. The loot is to be auctioned at Gilgit.

Christmas, 1891, at Hunza Castle as Military Governor. Duncan made C. O. Raga Pertab regiment. Marched from Hunza to Gulmat through various small villages to find the Rajah who had escaped from Hunza. Issued a proclamation that Hunza "now belongs to British Government and that as long as the inhabitants obey the British officer at Hunza all will go well with them."

Reports daily or so to Robertson, the political officer of district. Many difficult passes on road, being a succession of rocky staircases.

Soon afterwards he heard with regret that his appointment as Military Governor had been cancelled, and that he was to revert to the command of the Raga Pertab regiment. "Curly" Stewart was appointed political officer at Hunza and Manners-Smith was sent to Gilgit.

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\* A well-known and very experienced War Correspondent.

The following letter written to a friend of his in the theatrical profession at this time, gives some idea of what his plans were. He was always rather vague about the future and if he saw the faintest chance of a "scrap" in any other part of the world, he would at once try to "pull wires" to get himself into the thick of it.

January 24th, 1892. British Agency—Gilgit—Kashmir.

My dear M.—I just write you a couple of lines as the spirit moves me chiefly to tell you that having been ordered to take my regiment to a place called Skardo or Iskardu, from Hunza, I am now on the march and have left that lovely large poster of you behind at Hunza. It is put up in the Rajah's summer residence where Stewart, our political officer, lives, and he told me as I said goodbye this morning that with any luck he would have it posted up in Kashgar in the spring, where both Russians and Chinese could see it. You ought to be proud of being the only lady on the stage who I advertised in Central Asia, Hunza now being (since we have taken this country) the most northern point of British interest in Asia. . . . I shall be in Town in the summer for a month I believe, as I am going to the Egyptian army most likely. I might get my orders to go at any time now. At any rate, I must have a small razzle-dazzle at home whether I remain with my regiment in India or go and see a little service with Egyptian troops, and I hope I shall see both of you (Who said he was lost?) I have had enough of these infernal precipices and mountains (absolutely no "mashing" of any description!) You know that I always said that mountain scenery looks much better in a theatre from the stalls, and then soldiers always have a chorus of peasant

girls in all mountain scenery I have ever seen in a theatre. Well, there is no chorus in the Hunza Nagar expedition and no mashing for the Hunza Nagar Field Force. As Mr. Jorrocks says—"I'm a great admirer of beauty in all its branches and would rather give a shillin' to look at a pretty woman than a panorama, and a toolin' a young woman about in a buggy is uncommon nice sport." . . . There is no whisky left in our mess stores and only one box of cigarettes left and it is awfully cold. Marching in this country is the very devil, no plain clothes, have to live in uniform. If I could only get a good warm, lady's muff, I would be more contented. You see, we were only allowed to bring active service kit up here with us and now the business is over we can't get a thing sent up.

Ever yours sincerely,

CHARLIE.

*Feb. 1.* I get my captaincy to-day. Eleven years a subaltern. Total monthly pay of a captain, with allowances, 640 rupees.

*March 9.* Have handed over two prisoners of the Fonjkushada Irregulars and ordered their chains to be taken off and to be clothed. One poor devil had been in rags with only one blanket for five months and the cold is bitter. Felt very much for him when I went to see the prisoners. These people could hardly believe it when I ordered their chains to be taken off. After all, there is no discipline or idea of soldiering in the Fonjkushada and these poor devils were made examples of for sleeping on their posts as sentry. There is no doubt the Fonjkushada always did this, so whatever did they know about soldiering?

That was only one of the many instances of Townshend's solicitude for the rank and file.

The Egyptian Army appointment was apparently temporarily postponed, for Christmas, 1890, found Townshend in Agra, whither he had returned to rejoin the Central India Horse. This course was most probably advocated strongly by Sir Redvers Buller,\* who had always taken a keen interest in Townshend's affairs and tried to keep him steady in one course.

Much of his diary at this time deals with big game shooting:

We have news of a couple of tigers who live a mile or two up the valley among boulders and high grass. Coming here, we all lost our way in the jungles and we all got separated. Another fellow and myself must have gone about 30 miles before we found our way to the river Chambal. I thought I should have died of thirst, as we had no water and could find none. There was a blazing sun overhead, and I had had nothing to eat since two o'clock on the day before, because I had left the camp in the afternoon to wait up all night in the jungle to get a tiger, which did not come! But a splendid panther came, and I shot him through the head and measured him: 8 feet, 8 inches! Well, I was pretty done when I rode into camp at six in the morning, just as the other fellows were starting to ride to this place, so I came with them, feeling pleased about my panther, and then we lost our way and our ponies were utterly done. The Major and myself at last came upon some water in a ditch, and we drank this beastly water with the ponies! Well, we at last got into camp, and after drinking about six whiskies and sodas, we went straight off after a tiger, but he had cut

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\*Sir Redvers Buller was closely connected with Townshend by marriage—his wife being a daughter of the fourth Marquis and therefore a first cousin of his father.



out of the beat, most disgusting! I was very done and got up on the elephant to come home. It is very exciting to sit up all night in the jungle, and hear the different animals about. A water buffalo was tied to a tree and I was in a tree close by. It was one o'clock and I was dozing, I could not keep my eyes open, when there was a rush, and a panther had the bullock down and I woke in haste, fired, and missed him. I was angry, but the moon was hidden at the moment and I could not see the end of my rifle. At three o'clock I heard a big animal creeping up through the grass and he sprang out on to the buffalo and this time I sent an explosive bullet through his brain and he rolled over on his back. . . . Just returned from the river beat. I shot the tiger. As you may imagine, I am very pleased. I was sitting on the ground on a path under a steep cliff, and suddenly I heard a step behind me, and I turned round and there was the tiger looking at me about twelve yards away. Without getting up I screwed myself round and fired, killing him dead with an explosive bullet through his heart. I expect if I had only wounded him slightly, he would have killed me. When I came back all the women of the village came out and sang marching along. There must have been nearly 100 women. I gave them some rupees, or rather my servant did, and he said they were to go to their own "masters." I did not want them.

Meanwhile his correspondence is also kept up with "E. H.", his fiancée. After that, until the summer of 1891 there are no entries in the diary of great interest.

*June 25.* Telegram in the evening from Acting Governor General, Central India: "Colonel Durand applies urgently for services of Lieu-

tenant Townshend at Gilgit, and Viceroy wishes him go at once. Please send Townshend at once and report time of departure."

*July 3.* Start for Srinagar to-morrow, with Stewart of 5th Gurkhas and Molony of the Artillery. Both are ordered up to Gilgit.

Crossed in July several Passes: Tragbal, 11,000 feet; the Dorikun, 13,500.

When Townshend arrived at the little town of Astor on his way to Gilgit, he was informed by Lieut. Manners-Smith, the Assistant Resident, that he and "Curly" Stewart were to have the task of putting a couple of Kashmiri regiments into shape. He describes the situation of Gilgit, the residence of the British representative in Kashmir as follows:

*July 25.* The Gilgit valley is a desert. The road along the river is very bad in places, and very precipitous. On approaching Gilgit, the valley broadens out into a plain; the desert becomes a pleasant land, much wooded, orchards and cultivation and fruit in abundance and many hamlets, and then one arrives at the Fort, which is of considerable size for this part of the world. In fact, Gilgit is known, as Barrow says in his book, as the "Metz of Dardistan." The Residency is a charming little house, the grounds are pretty, and the house very well furnished.

Townshend's charge was the Raga Pertab Regiment, otherwise the 1st Kashmir Infantry, numbering 583 of all ranks. Discipline had become very slack, and according to Durand, there was "much rubbish" in the regiment. He had reported on this regiment as being the worst corps in the command. Townshend had therefore hard work before him, which he tackled with characteristic energy.

*Aug. 14.* Sent for the Adjutant and asked him what was doing in the regiment. It had as yet done no battalion drill, no musketry, no outpost duties nor advance or rear guards—in fact no duties of “detached” order of any kind. Bayonet exercise had never been done, but they do the manual and firing exercise. Saw a few recruits at evening drill, a dirty looking lot. Took the Adjutant down to the range and explained to him many things and how I wanted them done. There is a lot to be done to get the regiment in proper trim for active service in November.

Meanwhile events in Hunza were moving rapidly to a climax. Townshend scents an “affair” and has a joyful entry in his diary.

*September 10.* The Rajah of Hunza, Safdar Ali Khan, has refused to forward letters through his country to Younghusband. It is plain we must occupy Saffy’s country and disarm them. I wish we were marching at once.

This Safdar Ali Khan was a peculiarly blood-thirsty ruffian who in 1886 had murdered his father, Ghazan Khan, and at the same time had poisoned his mother, thrown two of his brothers down a precipice and made away with a third. These sanguinary proceedings did not appear to have excited any astonishment in Hunza; indeed, the murder of his father had been announced by Safdar Ali Khan himself to his suzerain, the Ruler of Kashmir, in the following terms:—

By the will of God and the decree of Fate, my late father and I recently fell out. I took the initiative and settled the matter, and have placed myself upon the throne of my ancestors.

But Safdar Ali had seen the Russians coming

closer and closer, without any effort of the English to stop them, even though they had actually reached territory within the jurisdiction of the Indian Government. All orientals have a supreme contempt for an exhibition of anything like weakness or what they consider to be weakness, and the Hunza Rajah did not believe in the ultimatum sent him by Colonel Durand, to the effect that the Indian Government had determined to keep the frontier open and intact. He replied that he cared nothing for the womanly English, as he hung upon the skirts of the manly Russians, and he had given orders to his followers to bring him the head of the British Agent at Gilgit on a platter! In another letter he wrote:—

I will withstand you even though I have to use bullets of gold. We will cut off your head, Colonel Durand, and then report you to the Indian Government.

Hunza and Nagar are two distinct petty states divided by the river Hunza. They have each their own chieftain, variously known as the "Rajah" or "Thum" or "Mir." It now appeared certain that operations would be undertaken against both. On September 20th a message arrived from Young-husband saying that he intended to stay with Stewart at Kukturuk, a slope of the Kilik Pass in Chinese Turkestan, in order to keep the British authorities informed of the movements of the Russians and Chinese. He also said that the Russians were sending arms to Hunza, and that he should as far as possible prevent a Russian mission from reaching there. However, on the following day came a further despatch to say that the Russians had apparently departed, but it was impossible to say why or where.

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*Nov. 20.* Hunza Nagar Field Force now settled. Colonel Durand takes on party while I am to turn the flank with the 5th Gurkhas and 200 rifles of the Raga Pertab. Quite a nice little command for me! The fires we had seen last night was the enemy burning their grass and other stores. They had sent away their women and built a bridge between Mayun and Nilt.

On December 2nd, the little force surmounted the Khotal Pass and reached Nilt Fort, and the village. This was a very formidable place. The villagers lived inside the fort, which was a sort of rabbit warren of strongly-built stone houses two or three storeys high with narrow alleys in between, the whole surrounded by a stone wall strengthened with massive timbers. This wall was twenty feet high and twelve feet thick, having square towers at intervals. The flat roofs of such fortified villages covered with stones are practically proof against shell-fire, and

the heaviest guns are necessary to make any impression on them. Thus fortified, Nilt was secure from any ordinary attack. The twenty feet wall was surrounded by another wall of about eight feet in height, loopholed for musketry. The ground outside this second wall fell away precipitously on all sides, except at one point leaving a narrow approach to the main gate. On one side of the fort, a steep water-course acted as a trench. The Hunza Nagar men had concentrated the whole of their defensive strength at this spot, and it was soon apparent that it was absolutely necessary to capture the place in a few hours or retire altogether. Also, for another reason, the assault could not be delayed. The enemy had cut off the artificial canal and the place had to be taken before the men could refill their water-bottles. Colonel Durand gave the order to carry it by direct assault, and the issue was uncertain till the Gurkhas were seen pouring into the fort which had been captured literally by a mere handful of men. Captain Aylmer was instructed to blow up the main gate to admit the storming party, and the position was eventually taken by Lieuts. Manners-Smith and Taylor, with their Gurkhas and Dogras who scaled the vertical cliff over 1,000 feet in height, and killed all its defenders. It has been described as one of the most brilliant feats in the history of Indian warfare. But let Townshend's diary speak for itself.

*Dec. 2 and 3.* Marched at 6 a.m. Great delay with baggage over the Khotal. In front of Nilt Fort about 1 fur. and attacked—fort only approachable by a narrow strip of cultivated land. The guns were brought up and shelled the fort at about 300 yards range only, the 5th Gurkhas supported by my battalion gradually crept forward keeping under shelter of rocks and close under



cliff. We got a very warm fire and one or two Ghurkas were hit and one man of my battalion was killed. Colonel Durand, standing near gun, was wounded in the thigh—we lay for a long time among the rocks—and then we suddenly got news that Boisragon with his 5th Gurkhas had got into the ditch and thence into the fort. We then pushed up, receiving a few shots from loopholes, got through the *abatis*, and down into a water course, and into the fort door, which had been blown in by Aylmer with gun cotton:—Several men were found hiding in the houses in the fort—I then got orders to occupy the fort with the Raga Pertab and make defensive arrangements. Our loss equalled three British officers wounded—all severely—viz., Colonel Durand, Aylmer, and Badcock.

Saw Colonel Durand last night, he was looking very cheerful: they got the bullet out at night—slept in fort.

There is no doubt that our position here is as nasty as it can well be. To storm Thol Fort in front of us will necessitate heavy loss from the numbers of sangars in front of us.

Wounded are all to be sent to Gilgit—sent 50 rifles of Raga Pertab to bring in convoy from Chalt.

*Dec. 7.* Orders this evening—we attack Fort Thol to-morrow at daybreak.

I have to occupy the Ziarat with my regiment, when the rest of the force has gone on to assault the fort at Thol, so as to prevent a counter-attack from Mayun. My regiment has now been so broken up by detachments taken from us that I shall only have 56 rifles available to-morrow. Of my officers Williams, who was also Commissariat, has been sent to Chalt, and Duncan, doing trans-

port, has been put with the 5th Gurkhas for tomorrow. Such is the way we have been treated.

*Dec. 8.* This is *the* most awful day I think I ever spent in my life!

We moved off from camp at 4.30 a.m. Got into the nullah below Nilt Fort and waited for daybreak—our guns then got to work on the fort to pound down the sangars on the precipitous cliffs in front. No effect after an hour, and then we got orders to stay where we were as an attack would be made, and there we stayed all day, not being able to get out without losing a lot of men from the fire of the sangars.

*Dec. 9.* A messenger came in from the enemy at Mayun this morning.

The purport of this letter was that Safdar Ali Khan did not want war and only wanted to watch what went on between England, Russia and China. Also that we ought not to think a lot of ourselves because we had taken Nilt.

It was supposed to be simply a feeler, and no doubt the Nagar people are bothering him a good deal. The answer sent back was short and sweet. We shall continue war as long as he shows a rebellious front.

*Dec. 11.* Built a sangar last night without getting a shot fired at us. I had with me Manners-Smith, 30 men of Body Guard, 20 of Spedding's road men, Appleford and McLeod with them, and about 40 bath coolies all carrying sandbags and logs. After getting near the point along the river, I halted the party and went on with Manners-Smith and got around the point over the rocks and down a gully on to the sand in front of enemy's sangars.

Having seen it was practicable for the men, I

left Manners-Smith to watch and went back to fetch on the men. Built the sangar, making it a sandbag redoubt called "Townshend's sangar." The men worked as silently as they could in the shadow of the rocks filling the sandbags and stacking them. The enemy never heard us and we got away about 1 o'clock, leaving a Jemadar and 8 sepoys to occupy it. I was very pleased to get everyone away without a shot being fired.

Am going with Duncan (who has been made Field Engineer) to-night to make another sangar ahead of this.

*Dec. 13.* Last night, Stewart, Boisragon, and Taylor went across the river on a raft with about a 100 men to try and take Mayun. They found a fire in the road, and some men watching, and as it was impossible to leave the road and get across fields and also impossible to get close to the fort without an alarm being given, they abandoned the enterprise and came back. Duncan was fired on while making the river-bed sangar, but luckily no one was hit.

Sent a sketch or two to the *Illustrated London News*.

Changed camp to a place in the cultivated fields farther from the fort.

*Dec. 20.* I write this at Thol. It has been a real day of success.

Thirty picked shots from each corps paraded on the ridge this morning and we fired on the sangars so accurately that they could hardly get a shot back. Manners-Smith and Taylor and 100 of the Body Guard then scaled the cliff (they had been hidden all night in the ravine) and rushed the sangars one after another in a most gallant and skilful manner, as they only had 2 men wounded. Many men were shot by us as they ran

out of the sangars. It was most exciting: and in one sangar Manners-Smith and his men shot down 20 men. As their party swept along the heights the enemy bolted out of the sangars. Then The whole garrison of Mayun bolted. We saw streams of men leaving the Ziarat and going into Thol. We fired long range volleys from the ridge. We advanced about 2 p.m. to take the Ziarat, Thol, and Gulmet. My regiment was the advance guard. 113 of the enemy surrendered to us when we got to the lower sangar.

I thought that only about 15 men would be in it: my surprise was great on jumping down from the roof to find 100 men. They laid down their arms when I told them; my men didn't come in for some 15 minutes afterwards, as the ascent was so difficult. I then went on in skirmishing order, occupying the Ziarat and carried one sangar with the bayonet. We took a very fine flag at the Ziarat, kept advancing on Thol fort by rushes, and having fixed bayonets we rushed in to find no one in it!

*Dec. 22.* Reached Tashol at 4.30 p.m. and halted till 2 a.m., then marching on again to-night to reach Nagar, where the force encamped at 7.30 a.m. The Rajar Zafar Khan has submitted. There has been no more fighting. Safdar Ali has fled from Hunza towards the Pamirs, with Uzzer Khan.

This fort of Hunza had been a robber stronghold for hundreds of years. Though somewhat dwarfed by the huge size of the mountains, it stands out from the rest of the landscape with a formidable air of mastering the whole valley.

The Hunzas and Nagaris had frequently raged little wars with one another, but this time they had joined forces to defy the British. After the campaign, both the little States submitted to become

part of the Indian Empire, and they were given Home Rule and allowed to manage their internal affairs themselves. It may be added here that both States became close friends of the British after their defeat. At the time of the Chitral crisis, the Mir of Hunza and the Mir of Nagar each brought 300 levies and 600 coolies for the relief expedition, in addition to the permanent bodies of levies furnished by each State. Moreover, both Mirs appeared at Gilgit at the head of their men.

Having been appointed Military Governor of Hunza, Townshend arrives to take over his duties.

Crossed the river with my regiment and entered Hunza. The fort was occupied by the Gurkhas under Boisragon when I arrived and Mr. Knight\* was with him. We dined together in the Rajah's apartments and inspected the loot—nothing much of value! Several Russian things. The loot is to be auctioned at Gilgit.

Christmas, 1891, at Hunza Castle as Military Governor. Duncan made C. O. Raga Pertab regiment. Marched from Hunza to Gulmat through various small villages to find the Rajah who had escaped from Hunza. Issued a proclamation that Hunza "now belongs to British Government and that as long as the inhabitants obey the British officer at Hunza all will go well with them."

Reports daily or so to Robertson, the political officer of district. Many difficult passes on road, being a succession of rocky staircases.

Soon afterwards he heard with regret that his appointment as Military Governor had been cancelled, and that he was to revert to the command of the Raga Pertab regiment. "Curly" Stewart was appointed political officer at Hunza and Manners-Smith was sent to Gilgit.

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\* A well-known and very experienced War Correspondent.

The following letter written to a friend of his in the theatrical profession at this time, gives some idea of what his plans were. He was always rather vague about the future and if he saw the faintest chance of a "scrap" in any other part of the world, he would at once try to "pull wires" to get himself into the thick of it.

January 24th, 1892. British Agency—Gilgit—Kashmir.

My dear M.—I just write you a couple of lines as the spirit moves me chiefly to tell you that having been ordered to take my regiment to a place called Skardo or Iskardu, from Hunza, I am now on the march and have left that lovely large poster of you behind at Hunza. It is put up in the Rajah's summer residence where Stewart, our political officer, lives, and he told me as I said goodbye this morning that with any luck he would have it posted up in Kashgar in the spring, where both Russians and Chinese could see it. You ought to be proud of being the only lady on the stage who I advertised in Central Asia, Hunza now being (since we have taken this country) the most northern point of British interest in Asia. . . . I shall be in Town in the summer for a month I believe, as I am going to the Egyptian army most likely. I might get my orders to go at any time now. At any rate, I must have a small razzle-dazzle at home whether I remain with my regiment in India or go and see a little service with Egyptian troops, and I hope I shall see both of you (Who said he was lost?) I have had enough of these infernal precipices and mountains (absolutely no "mashing" of any description!) You know that I always said that mountain scenery looks much better in a theatre from the stalls, and then soldiers always have a chorus of peasant

girls in all mountain scenery I have ever seen in a theatre. Well, there is no chorus in the Hunza Nagar expedition and no mashing for the Hunza Nagar Field Force. As Mr. Jorrocks says—"I'm a great admirer of beauty in all its branches and would rather give a shillin' to look at a pretty woman than a panorama, and a toolin' a young woman about in a buggy is uncommon nice sport." . . . There is no whisky left in our mess stores and only one box of cigarettes left and it is awfully cold. Marching in this country is the very devil, no plain clothes, have to live in uniform. If I could only get a good warm, lady's muff, I would be more contented. You see, we were only allowed to bring active service kit up here with us and now the business is over we can't get a thing sent up.

Ever yours sincerely,

CHARLIE.

*Feb. 1.* I get my captaincy to-day. Eleven years a subaltern. Total monthly pay of a captain, with allowances, 640 rupees.

*March 9.* Have handed over two prisoners of the Fonjkushada Irregulars and ordered their chains to be taken off and to be clothed. One poor devil had been in rags with only one blanket for five months and the cold is bitter. Felt very much for him when I went to see the prisoners. These people could hardly believe it when I ordered their chains to be taken off. After all, there is no discipline or idea of soldiering in the Fonjkushada and these poor devils were made examples of for sleeping on their posts as sentry. There is no doubt the Fonjkushada always did this, so whatever did they know about soldiering?

That was only one of the many instances of Townshend's solicitude for the rank and file.

Another was his overhauling of the hospital. He described the "filthy" hospital hut in the lines as not fit to put an animal in and arranged that the sick should be shifted to tents in the garden.

*April 25.* The letter from the Queen to the Rajah of Kashmir about the death of the Duke of Clarence read out to the Battalion on parade this morning. I gave out that all punishments were let off. The Commandant tells me that the men were much touched by the Queen's message.

*June 6.* A man, Baskat Ali, had the insolence to send me a letter this morning saying that he would proceed against me in Civil Court for refusing to hear a petition. Sent for Baskat Ali, kicked him out of the office and the orderlies ducked him in a pond. Have ordered that he is to have 24 hours to clear out of Skardo to Kashmir, and if not, he will be imprisoned. He had been convicted of stirring up the Baltis against their C.O.

*June 16.* Wrote to Marquis Townshend direct to thank him for all he had done for me, saying I wished to do without any more allowance and wishing I could have done without years ago.

*July 10.* English mail in. Only *La Vie Parisienne* for me. As I get no letters now I shall give up writing any. News from England all about the coming elections and Gladstone's Home Rule policy. The Conservatives are frightening the British public as to the consequences of Ulster and civil war.

*July 11.* Hear from England of the death of Mr. Cather, Lord Townshend's man of business. I believe he was fast pulling things round again in Lord T's affairs and now I fear it is a very bad



business, outside of his being a good fellow. (*This was a mistake on Townshend's part as he was to find out later.*)

*July 24.* Seen a copy of Labouchère's remarks in Parliament ridiculing all the mentioning of officers in despatches, and saying that the climax must have been reached in Durand's despatches. Ridicules their being mentioned for doing their simplest duty. Quotes my case as being mentioned in despatches for having brought the Raga Pertab regiment to a creditable state of discipline and efficiency, and says it was for work done in peace time. Well, I commanded the regiment in the campaign, was made Military Governor of Hunza and commanded the party in pursuit of Safdar Ali. If I had not the right to be mentioned in despatches, I don't know who had!

*July 26.* Honours for Hunza Nagar Campaign:—Durand, C.B. and promotion to Lieut.-Colonel, Aylmer, Boisragon and Manners-Smith get V.C., Mackenzie and Twigg promoted Captain.

*July 28.* Made a football and made the men play football. Great fun. Letter from Buller C.I.H. saying my furlough is all right. Reply to him that it is possible I may refuse furlough, as it is so late in the year.

*July 31.* Raga Pertab regiment ordered to be relieved. Men overjoyed and played all the afternoon at football and hockey to celebrate the occasion. Did not get the letters that I expected, so I beat the postmaster!

On August 2nd Townshend marched the Raga Pertab regiment down from Skardo to Srinagar, and

notes the following interesting details as to the number of coolies required for the march of a regiment. Nine hundred and twenty in all: This includes a coolie for each sepoy: forty-six for the officers of the regiment and thirty for Townshend alone: sixty-four for the non-commissioned officers; one hundred and sixty for the tents, spare rifles, etc.: seventy for four days' rations: thirteen for the hospital, sixty spare coolies. In addition, there were three hundred and sixty-nine required for the "Irregular Corps," the Fonjkushada. On August 31st the Rajah of Skardo sent after Townshend to say he wanted a "chit" from him—some sort of testimonial that he had behaved well! He got a "chit" to say he was a keen sportsman and could play polo!

By the middle of September, 1892, Townshend had evidently made up his mind that he would forgo his leave for the time. What his reasons were is not very clear, but doubtless the advice he had received from Lady Townshend had something to do with it, and it may also have been that he did not want to lose the chance of getting up to Gilgit again under Colonel Durand. For he wired to Colonel Buller that he had decided to return to Poonah to complete his regimental course. On October 26th he took over the command of the 4th Squadron of the C.I.T. at Poonah.

Manners-Smith, who was now Political Officer at Khotal, wrote him that Durand would be glad to have Townshend up with him at Gilgit again. So he at once wired to Durand asking him to apply for him. A movement against the Chitralis was in the air, though Manners-Smith thought it only meant that we wanted to dominate Chitral for our own ends. Colonel Durand's reply was not encouraging, as he already had the full complement of officers. But Sir Mortimer Durand, to whom Townshend

had also applied for assistance, replied from Calcutta that he would see what he could do.

All through March, 1893, the diary records his work for the examination, and the routine affairs of a garrison course at Poonah. The last day of the examination was April 6th, and he was much cheered two days before by receiving a letter from Durand to say that he had applied for his services at Gilgit.

It appeared probable that after so many contradictory reports, the Indus Valley expedition was to come off at last. The Mehtar of Chitral had died, and his sons were fighting as to who would succeed him. Matters looked threatening in the district, and Durand moved up a small force from Gilgit to Gakuch. Then affairs settled down again and Dr. Robertson and Captain Younghusband were sent on a mission to Chitral. An English officer of the Indian Army had been wounded in a skirmish between Boonje and Chilas, and a small detachment was sent to occupy Chilas Fort which they found deserted. The tribes attacked the garrison and Major Daniel of the Guides was killed, but the attack was repulsed. The whole frontier was thus in a state of ferment and Durand was in need of all the help he could get from men who knew the district and had served there before.

*April 14, 1893.* Letter from Curly Stewart in the Intelligence Dept. at Simla telling me that I shall get orders very soon from the foreign, not the Military Department, but that my route is not yet decided. Wrote to Lady St. Levan\* to say I was very sorry to have bothered Lord St. Levan about the Egyptian Army and then go off to Gilgit, but had no choice in the matter.

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\*Sister of fifth Marquis Townshend.

On April 16th Townshend received a telegram from the Commandant C.I.H. informing him that his services had been transferred to Military Department for employment at Gilgit, and on the 21st he left Poonah for Rawal Pindi, *en route* for Gilgit via Bhopal, Jhansi, Gwalior, Agra, Tundra, Umballa, Lahore and Muree, to Bandipur where he was to await further instructions from Durand.

### Over the Tragbal Pass.

*May 4.* Started from Bandipur at 5 p.m. and reached Kralpura at the foot of the Tragbal about 7 o'clock. We soon found the coolies to be a damn bad lot. Here we rested till about 10 p.m. and had something to eat. We then commenced the Tragbal winding up the zig-zag road up the mountain. At 8.30 a.m. (May 5th) we reached the hut at the top of the Tragbal among the fir trees, just before you reach the summit and commence the Pass. The hut was not built when I went up to Gilgit in 1891. Davison and I slept as we best could. Very cold, and no blanket or coat, but we lit a fire. The coolies, who had been driven on by Goodha Singh, arrived about 6 a.m. We started at 6.30 and crossed the Pass, all snow as far as you can see around. The height of the Tragbal Pass is 1,100 feet. We descended the steep slopes on the other side down the frozen snow bed of the river and reached the hut at Gulai at about 4 p.m. having done about 27 miles from Bandipur including the Tragbal Pass. Gulai is just beyond Zukusa where we encamped when I went up to Gilgit before. There was no hut at Gulai then. Zukusa is two dirty log huts. I thought the baggage would never arrive.

*May 6.* Left Gulai hut at 6 p.m. and arrived At Badwan at Mitchell's hut at 11 a.m. Very glad

to see Willie Mitchell. He put us up and did us very well. Arranged for our coolies to go on tomorrow. The new Tchsildar (or as he styles himself the "Nawab Sahib") is away hanging after the globe-trotters shooting—Lord Zouche and Colonel Trotter in the nullahs about here. Mitchell tells me the place is bristling with globe-trotters. Colonel Barr, the Resident in Kashmir, has opened the Gilgit road again to sportsmen, telling them they must "make their own arrangements." Their own arrangements means a stick in your hand and coolies bagged! I bought a 500 double express by Purdey from Mitchell for 350 rupees.

*May 7.* Paid off the coolies from Bandipur and got men from Gulai to take me on. Davison and I left Mitchell at 4 p.m. I hear that affairs are all right in Chilas. Five hundred of the Body Guard and five British officers and two guns in the fort. Nothing known about Chitral where Robertson is with 50 Sikhs and Bruce and Gurdon with him. The scenery at Gulai is splendid, the linden trees looking lovely. It is a great treat travelling on Spedding's new road which did not exist when I came up before.

*May 8.* Reached Mappanoon at 10 a.m. and here I had intended to stop, but determined to push on to Minnamarg at the foot of the Boorzil Pass. The coolies did not seem to see it, and chucked their loads down on the road, but on my punching the ringleader, they all rushed and took up their loads and hurried on.

Over the Boorzil Pass.

*May 9.* Reached the Boorzil hut at 10 a.m. in a snow storm. 10,000 feet. No chance of our crossing to-night, as we had intended.

*May 10.* Cleared up about 10 a.m. Davison and I started over the Pass about 2 p.m. Reached the top at 4.15. Much snow but not bad going. Height 13,500 feet. We got down to Sirdar Koti, a miserable little hut, at 6 p.m. It had snowed hard the last two hours. The hut was crowded with coolies and travellers, and bitterly cold. I determined to go on as soon as light about 1 a.m. and reach the Chilam hut. No moon and the guide was very much against our going, but I insisted, and we floundered out into the deep snow about 2 a.m. I have never had such a night. We could see no track: the snow was fresh laid, very deep and soft, and so we tumbled up to our waists pretty freely. I was dead beat and so was the guide when we staggered into the hut at Chilam just about an hour after daylight.

*May 13.* Reached Astor about 2 p.m. Put up with Appleford and Blaker of Spedding's road company. Got a lot of news. Blaker says the Chilasis can't do anything as Dr. Robertson burned all their grain when he burned Chilas. Good move that. Tells me Curly Stewart goes to Yasin. I shall miss him at Gilgit.

*May 17.* Reached Bunzi at 9.30 a.m. All is quiet in Chilas. The wounded have been brought into Bunzi and will be sent on to Astor.

*May 18.* Rode in from Bunzi to Gilgit. Crossed the new bridge over the Indus about five miles above Bunzi. Manners-Smith, Major Twigg, Hon. A. Napier (brother of Napier of the C.I.H.) Wallace and Roberts\* at Gilgit. Wallace, who was shot through the knee near Chilas, goes down to India. I was very glad to meet the fellows again and we drank the merry "boy" at dinner. Twigg,

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\* Afterwards Sir James Roberts, K.C.I.E.

who is Second-in-Command at Gilgit, tells me I am to go up to Gupis in Yasin with 150 rifles in relief of O'Brien and the 15th Sikhs who are there. Curly Stewart is Political Officer there, so nothing could be better.

## CHAPTER IV

### FORT GUPIS

IN April, 1893, Townshend was appointed Commandant of the little Fort Gupis, situated at the extreme north-west corner of the borderland between Kashmir and Central Asia, not far from Chitral, ever a hotbed of disaffection, and in close proximity to the frontiers of China, Russian Turkestan, and Afghanistan. The position was a very responsible one, for whoever held it had to keep in touch with all the movements of the various tribes along the frontier and of the Russians, ever endeavouring in their designs on India to creep further south.

The duties were set down by Townshend in his diary as follows:—

- Keeping weekly returns of supplies and expenditure (both political and military).

- Keeping in close touch with political officers at Chitral and Gilgit.

- Getting intelligence of all movements of tribes.

- Hearing all complaints of District Governors.

- Keeping accounts of political chest for subsidies.

- Drilling the garrison and keeping them fit.

- Keeping Fort in order, or building new adjuncts or forts.

- Keeping roads in order and superintending the making of new ones.

- Receiving and providing convoys for treasure to and fro.

- Getting news of movements of Russians, Afghans and Chinese.

- Hearing miscellaneous complaints and requests



(such as that of the Rani, who wanted to sell her bangles for cash!)

Receiving visitors and attending to wayfarers.

Fort Gupis, in short, constituted a sort of outpost on "the Roof of the World" and, what was more important, a half-way house between Gilgit and Chitral (or Mastuj).

*May 25.* Reached Gupis about 9.30 a.m. The Fort is situated about one mile beyond Gupis, at the entrance of the Yasin valley. Position of fort is extremely bad, commanded on all sides within easy musketry, and even matchlock range, and not very close to the water.

*May 27.* "Curly" Stewart arrived from Yasin, and stays two or three days before going on to Langar to meet Robertson and Bruce, returning with the Chitral mission. I told him what a rat-trap the fort was and how a determined enemy might make it very hot for us.

The same day that Stewart arrived the two of them sit down to write letters to their lady friends in the London Bohemian world.

May 27th, 1893.

My dear M——. This is a most awful place. You never saw such a desert. Just see if you can find it on the map. It is north of Gilgit. However, I know you will never find it, and it don't much matter, but here I am stuck down with a few troops. "Curly" Stewart is here to-day. He rode over from Yasin last night, and we foregathered, and he told me all about you. We had a long talk over bad cigarettes and muddy water and whisky. He advised me to call this new fort "Fort Garrick." The officers' quarters I have called "York Buildings," and "Curly" is building



CAPTAIN TOWNSHEND OF THE CENTRAL INDIAN  
HORSE



a house at Yasin which he is going to call "Adelphi." He tells me that he quite agrees with you that the girls' dresses at the Alhambra are too much covered up. . . .

In the above letter a scrawl from Stewart himself was enclosed:

. . . I think Charlie is giving you the news. He says he is sending you a book called "Tales of the Queen of Navarre," which looks to me a cheerful sort of work. We live a quiet suburban life here, and I think of becoming a missionary! . . .

But neither Townshend nor Stewart in the midst of all their frivolities, ever neglected their official duties, and the responsibility laid on them was great. It was still another example, if one were needed, of how Britain could depend on her young men to uphold the interests of her Empire with efficiency and dignity in the most remote quarters of the world.

*May 30.* Ghulam Dast Gir, Governor of Yasin, came in yesterday morning from Yasin, on his way to meet Robertson coming back from Chitral. Stewart also goes up as far as Langar. Ghulam Dast Gir is the man sent in by the present Mehtar of Chitral to be Governor of Yasin, and I believe the people don't like him. I should be very sorry to be in his power. He looks cunning and cruel, and if I were Stewart I would not trust him a yard further than I could see him. He and his crew left about 6 p.m. and Stewart followed later.

*June 3.* Mr. Robertson, returning with the Chitral mission, arrived at midnight accompanied by Bruce of the 5th Gurkhas. Younghusband is left as Political Officer in Chitral with escort of 50 Sikhs under Lieut. Gurdon. Stewart

came also, with Robertson and the Governor of Yasin and large following. Robertson had a look round the fort and said my arrangements and ideas in the event of being attacked were very sound. In the course of conversation he said that if the Tangis people did attack they would most likely come in large numbers and encamp somewhere near us, so it was best not to attack them, but let them attack us and get snuff against our parapets. One would only lose men in trying to turn them out of a position, and if you did turn them out you would have to return to your fort again. If you leave them alone for two days, they finish up their grub, and can either be compelled to attack you when strongly entrenched, or go away. I gathered that Robertson wishes to have Gupis as a H.Q. to hold the Yasin and Gizeh valleys, and has recommended this to the Government.

*June 24.* A woman and her children came here to ask protection. Said she was going to be sold into slavery. Stewart ordered that she could remain in Gupis at present, and have rations from the fort. The man who came to fetch her was sent away by Stewart. (NOTE.—She was old and not good-looking.)

The routine life at Gupis went on steadily with little of moment, though almost every day brought evidence that the Chitralis were preparing for a decisive movement of some kind. Their friendship, and that of the tribes neighbouring on Kashmir and the spheres of British influence, was partly kept by granting subsidies of various amounts, sometimes in actual cash and sometimes in sheep or other forms of property. Townshend and Stewart, being old and very fast friends, were able to work well together, and the position was still better for the former when Stewart, in 1893, became Acting British Agent at

Gilgit, the headquarters of the British in Kashmir and the surrounding districts of this out of the way corner of the world. In September they had the excitement of a serious earthquake which is described in the diary:

*Sept. 19.* A very bad shock of earthquake here last night. About 3.30 a.m. I woke up with the room rocking violently and a most tremendous crash, so that I thought the mess was coming down. I didn't take long to get out of the door. Opposite, from the cliffs above the river, masses of rock were crashing down. A part of the picquet sangar fell, slightly hurting a sepoy. I had always thought there was danger to this sangar from an earthquake, or the melting of the winter snows, and that a blockhouse should be built further away from the edge of the cliff. We had actually commenced to build a new blockhouse on the 15th. I have never felt a big earthquake before, and it is like skating across a ship's deck in a heavy wind, giving a cross sea sort of feeling. The men turned out of their quarters like a swarm of bees. I don't want any more earthquakes. No more shocks occurred, but several times there was a deep rumbling underground, as if a big game of bowls was being played in the earth. I finished this pleasant evening in an easy armchair, with cigarettes and rum and water, wondering and waiting for another shock, and listening to the underground rumblings. It was a lovely starlight night the whole time.

While Stewart was Acting British Agent at Gilgit, a good deal of correspondence passed between him and Townshend with reference to the Chitral situation. Townshend was constantly receiving warnings from local Rajahs of the ill feeling which Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Mehtar (or Rajah) of Chitral, bore

towards the English, and how he was for ever stirring up the chiefs to rebel against our authority. He sent Stewart a long letter from the fort at Thayer Lasht, with details of what he had heard from Hassan Shah, the Sayid of Gupis, who would have been in danger of his life if it had been discovered that he had warned the British. Townshend may have had his doubts about the sincerity of these warnings, for he did not believe in the treachery of Nizam-ul-Mulk, though he thought him quite capable of anything. Later events were to show whose diagnosis of the Mehtar's actions was right, and in the meantime Townshend kept on repeating that what *he* wanted was "Troops at Gupis; good roads; a telegraph and a Political Agent in Chitral."

In November, 1893, Townshend was at Camp Shashi within the territory of Chitral, where he was treated with great ceremony by the Mehtar, who insisted on sending a guard with him wherever he went. Here he received a letter from one of the sisters (now both married) with whom he used to correspond so regularly, and his reply is amusing enough:

Camp Shashi: Chitral, November 9th, 1893.

Dear L. As I rode into the village about half an hour ago, at the head of a mob of "catch-em-alive-ohs," armed to the teeth, for the King of Chitral insists on guarding me on my trip, a man came up with some letters which have come up here from the fort at Thayer Lasht, three days march from here where my fort is. Now, a post in this part of the world is a source of thrilling and delicious (though innocent) excitement, but I did not expect the treat of getting a letter from you.

Nothing of excitement has occurred here, only there is every appearance of a row. In fact, I don't

see how we shall get through the winter without a pantomime rally up here of sorts, and I am glad to say they have reinforced me at Thayer Lasht with a gun and more troops. Spies bring in all sorts of rumours, however, as Mrs. Brown says: "I s'pose it'll blow over." But a row up here would suit me, as I should be in command. You can imagine me leading a charge with a cigarette case in one hand and a silver-headed cane in the other, can't you? Like Sir Middlesex Mashem! There is actually a lady now at Gilgit. I think it awful rot and nonsense. A fellow in the Transport Corps (the fellows in that corps are *all* married) has brought his wife up. I call it turning the place into a regular Punch and Judy Show! Gilgit will be getting quite suburban, and lines of dubious-looking lingerie, I suppose, hung out to dry, like you see in the outskirts of London, as you approach in the train.

You say that you heard that I was making myself comfortable and fixing myself up. Of course I try to live as little as possible like John the Baptist, although I *am* in the desert. As regards being happy, one's life in Central Asia is bound to be like being stretched on the bed of Procrustes. "Le temps s'en va de jour en jour sans repos prendre et sans sejour!" However, I expect the season of '95 will see me home, wearing gum boots and "filant le parfait amour." We "follow fleeting fires" as some sportsman says in Tennyson. I have no doubt you are perfectly happy and with an appetite like a Second Lieutenant. . . . As happy, at least, as marriage will admit of, for no two people yet lived together for more than three weeks without getting horribly bored with one another. You put me down as a bad 'un, I know and will be highly indignant: it's no use arguing with people I know, but that



does not alter the fact that what I say is perfectly true.

I suppose I shall be happy when I find myself in the club at home in the purlieus of Piccadilly. A few glasses of Monopole, delicious cigarettes, and a glass of that old brandy to send me along after dinner. I see all these in my dreams and *more than these*. But though I stretch out longing hands, they vanish as a vision in the night and I wake up through some blarsted bugle call in Thayer Lasht! A lady wrote to me the other day and said: "Why is it we like wicked people best?" I replied: "I dunno; I suppose for the same reason that one prefers a comfy long chair in a boudoir to a hard wet seat in a bathing machine."

Well, I will end this very long letter.

Townshend kept in with all the little Rajahs of the neighbourhood and conciliated them, not only out of the "political chest" with the authorised subsidies of the Government, but by little presents from himself personally. There is a quaint letter of thanks from one of the chiefs who had warned him against the Mehtar of Chitral, and all about a cake of Pear's soap, which he had sent him to try!

From Rajah Tahamal Shah, Governor of  
Yasin, to Captain Townshend:

*(Translated from the Persian.)*

After compliments and wishing for a meeting—your honour's letter arrived and a piece of soap. Wonderful and marvellous! So marvellous that were a man to beat his hands and his feet one hundred times such soap could never come to his hands. Your honour having done kindness and sent this in such a fortunate and happy moment, has caused me much exaltation. My friend, the smell of musk and of ambergris, mixed with attar

of roses, reaches the pores of my soul, and has moreover scented the brain of our friendship and has been the cause of the increase and strengthening of our mutual love. O my kind friend! if after this, such soap comes to your hands, be pleased to send me some and it will do honour to this servant of God. If I can be of any service to you, please acquaint me with the pen of mercury and I shall comply.

The Hon. George Curzon, afterwards Marquis Curzon of Kedleston, visited Townshend's fort, and has left this note of his impression:—

The British Officer in command rode out to greet me and offered me the modest hospitality of the Fort. In his company I visited the lines inside the Fort, the keep containing the officers' quarters, the dispensary hospital, school stores and magazine. . . . Even more vividly, however, than the inspection of the garrison do I remember the night spent with my somewhat unusual host. He combined with an absorbing interest in military science and an equal familiarity with the writings of Hamley and Clausewitz and the strategy of Hannibal, Marlborough and the Emperor Napoleon, an interest in the gayer side of existence of which Paris was to him the hub and symbol. On the walls of his mud dwelling were pinned somewhat daring coloured illustrations from Parisian journals of the lighter type: and he regaled us through a long evening with French songs to the accompaniment of a banjo.

*Nov. 27, 1894.* I have now begun working for the Staff College. Wrote to St. Aubyn\* saying I meant to go through the Staff College if I could, and said I might get a nomination from the Duke

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\*Nephew of fifth Marquis Townshend. Succeeded his father as second Baron St. Levan.

of Cambridge for active service, if it were worked properly. I said 1896 would suit me best, as it would allow of my remaining as Staff Officer at Gilgit for a year beforehand. Asked him if he thought Sir Redvers Buller would help me in the matter of nomination.

*Dec. 5.* Campbell (Inspecting Officer of the Imperial Service troops at Gilgit) inspected the detachment here. I showed him the firing, bayonet and manual, physical drill, attack and a hill parade, taking the men up the cliff and along the platform south of fort and then home. Not a man fell out. The men were absolutely perfect at everything; I would pit them confidently against any British Indian regiment. Campbell was delighted and the British Agent, who looked on, said to me: "It reflects the highest credit on you to have brought the men to such a pitch of efficiency." He has written all about it to Colonel Durand. I am delighted, I must say. It repays me for all my trouble and doing a regular drill sergeant's work at morning and evening parades for the last 5 months. The British Agent was specially delighted with the way we scaled the mountainside, and said afterwards: "Those are the men for us."

The year ended in a state of tension upon the Frontier. Britishers and Chitralis alike, were "on edge," or, as an Irishman might say, "spoiling for a fight." But Townshend was in a better position than he had been in all his military career. Holding a post of great responsibility, he revelled in the idea that he might, even now, lead a force of his own in a frontier war, a force that would largely consist of men whom he had trained from a state of slovenly inefficiency into one of the best turned out and most capable regiments of the Imperial Service troops.

## CHAPTER V

### CHITRAL: (I) THE ADVANCE

CHITRAL is on the main and shortest line of communication between the Punjab, Afghanistan and the Russian districts of the Oxus (only two days' journey away) and close to the Baroghil and Darah passes over the Hindu Khoosh. These circumstances give it an outstanding geographical and strategical importance. Traders, pilgrims and men of the neighbouring tribes pass up and down through Chitral, on errands of peace or war. Hence it was always considered a place for the Indian Government to maintain with a firm hold. Including the minor provinces of Yasin and Mastuj, Chitral consists of seven valleys running north and south, and one east and west, along the Ghizar river. Hunza and Nagar lie to the east, and Afghanistan to the south and west.

Up to 1889, Chitral was divided into Upper and Lower Chitral, each of which was governed by a member of a family of Persian origin. The ruler of Chitral as a whole was called a "Mehtar" (from a Persian word signifying "greater"), and Upper Chitral, which then included Yasin and Mastuj, was separately governed. The two branches were continually at war.

In about 1856, Aman-ul-Mulk killed his elder brother, who was the Mehtar at the time, and took his place. He brought both divisions of the country under his own sway, and then, to make matters still more safe for himself, killed his next brother as well. Nearly twenty-five years later, realising that he was no longer a young man, Aman-ul-Mulk made his

eldest son, Nizam-ul-Mulk, Governor of the Yasin district, and his second son, Afzul-ul-Mulk, Governor of Mastuj. He had seventy children and was certainly the leading figure of the Hindu Khoosh. At one time he had paid tribute to Afghanistan, but when threatened by the Amir of that country he had appealed for protection to the ruler of Kashmir, and Lord Lytton, then Viceroy, advised that protection should be afforded him.

The Maharajah of Kashmir undertook to shield Chitral from the designs of the Afghans, and granted him a subsidy of 8,000 rupees per annum, which was doubled in 1881. In 1885 a British mission under Sir William Lockhart was sent to Chitral and made a pact with Aman, leaving Colonel Durand as British Agent. Moreover an extra subsidy of 12,000 rupees was granted by the Indian Government in the same year as the Hunza Nagar campaign.

In 1892, the Mehtar, Aman-ul-Mulk, suddenly died, not without a suspicion of poison. His three chief sons were Nizam-ul-Mulk (governor of Yasin), Afzul-ul-Mulk (governor of Mastuj), and Shah-ul-Mulk.

This Shah-ul-Mulk was 28 years old in 1886, and though the son of an inferior wife, was the best educated of old Aman's seventy children. He had told Sir William Lockhart that when the old man should die, there would be some pretty fighting between the sons. Afzul, he said, would seize Yasin, drive out Nizam-ul-Mulk, and make himself master of Chitral. All this happened, and, being in Chitral when the old man died, he proceeded to murder Shah-ul-Mulk and his two brothers Wazir and Bairam, and prepared to fight his eldest brother, Nizam-ul-Mulk. Nizam fled to Gilgit, placing himself under the protection of the British. Afzul wrote to the Viceroy saying he had succeeded to the throne "by the consent of his brothers." The Indian Gov-

ernment, knowing in reality very little about it all, rather rashly acceded. There was, however, an elder brother of old Aman, Sher Afzul by name, who had escaped being murdered by Aman some years before by fleeing to Kabul. Hearing how matters stood in Chitral, he collected a force and marched upon it. Then it was Afzul's turn to be killed. Sher Afzul gained nothing by the murder, for Nizam-ul-Mulk, supported by Hunza and other troops, and perhaps encouraged by the British, himself marched on Chitral. Sher Afzul fled, and Nizam was installed as rightful Mehtar.

A new rival now appeared on the horizon. This was Umra Khan, a Pathan who had married one of the seventy children of the old Aman. He, in his turn, advanced on Chitral with his wife's brother (a half brother of Nizam) and began to intrigue against the Mehtar. The latter requested support from the Indian Government and the presence of British officers to remain permanently at Chitral with a force of sepoys. The Government sent Captain Younghusband, an officer who knew the neighbourhood and the nature of the Chitralis very well, but kept him at Mastuj, and Lord Kimberley only sanctioned his retention as a temporary measure. The Mehtar repeatedly appealed to the Government that the officer should be stationed not at Mastuj, sixty miles away, but at Chitral itself.

It was not to be supposed that Nizam, though supported by the British, would be allowed to hold the throne in peace. On January 1st, 1895, he was murdered by Amir-ul-Mulk, his half brother and next heir to the throne. This member had previously conspired against Nizam, but had been forgiven and allowed to return to Chitral from the exile he shared with Umra Khan.

Nizam-ul-Mulk was an amiable, good-tempered and intelligent Mehtar, but far too weak for the

position which his predecessor, old Aman-ul-Mulk, had filled so successfully only by the exhibition of great firmness and, on occasion, cruelty. An extra inducement for Amir-ul-Mulk to choose this moment for the murder was that in the year 1894, the subsidy amounted to 30,000 rupees, and the treasury at Chitral was full. Thus, besides obtaining the Mehtarship, the usurper would come into possession of a nice sum of ready money.

Nizam had come to the throne himself only through murder. He was the eldest son of old Aman, it is true, but when the old man died the throne had been seized by Afzul-ul-Mulk, a favourite son by another wife. Nizam fled to Gilgit, and after Sher Afzul had murdered his nephew, he returned to seize the throne himself.

At this time, the British officers in Chitral were Lieut. Gurdon, Political Officer in Chitral itself, and Lieut. Harley of the 14th Sikhs, in charge at Mastuj. Townshend sent the news of the murder of Nizam to Mr. Robertson, British Agent at Gilgit in several letters, of which the following is a summary:

The Governor of Ghizar, and a following of about 30 people, have arrived here with news of the death of Nizam-ul-Mulk. According to him, the Mehtar was out hawking on the 1st inst., when Amir-ul-Mulk (who I believe is the heir apparent) shot him from behind, though they say his rifle went off by accident. But further details show that before he fell off his horse, he called out that Amir had shot him and called upon his attendants to kill him. All the attendants went over to the new Mehtar. Nizam was left on the ground and died in half an hour, and meanwhile Amir galloped off to take possession of Chitral. . . . The Governor of Ghizar said that they had

liked Nizam, who had been put in by the British, but now that he was dead, they wanted no more Rajahs, but British rule, and asked me to tell you this. . . . I expect a messenger any moment from Gurdon at Chitral, but cannot understand why I have received no news from Harley at Mastuj, who must have heard the news some days ago. If Gurdon asks me to move up to Mastuj, I shall do so, as he will not ask unless the matter is urgent. In that case, I shall take 150 rifles to Mastuj, and leave 100 rifles here at Gupis. If it should be necessary to move, I can reach Mastuj in five days from here. . . .

It was an anxious and trying time for Townshend and he came out of it with the greatest credit. He was a very young officer for such a position as he held, and had to take important decisions on his own. Gilgit was some days' journey away, and, though the people of Ghizar and Yasin professed the utmost friendliness, they could not be trusted to keep their word.

At last the welcome letter from Harley at Mastuj arrived, sending one from Gurdon at Chitral. Gurdon's letter had been written on January 1st, the day of the Mehtar's murder. The young Agent at Chitral did not think there was any necessity for Townshend to move up there or to Mastuj, until he got direct orders from Mr. Robertson. But he was of course to use his own discretion in case of urgency.

Townshend was very keen, for military reasons, to move up to Mastuj with reinforcements, but, as usual, political reasons stood in the way of making any kind of a demonstration in force. Harley wished to join Gurdon, but Gurdon, who showed a good deal of hard common sense in all that he did, pointed out that it was most necessary for a British



officer to be at Mastuj to receive any chiefs or other notabilities coming in.

A letter to Townshend, dated January 7th, from the Assistant British Agent at Gilgit, approved of what he had done, and said the arrangements were excellent. He was also told he might occupy the Ghizar Darband.

Having received definite orders to advance on Chitral with 250 rifles, Townshend started off the first detachment of 150 men on January 12th, 1895, and followed with the second detachment on the 14th. All the men were of the 4th Kashmir Rifles. The men had been trained to carry kits of 60 lbs. in case of emergency, but as coolie transport was available, their kits were of only 30 lbs. Gupis is 7,300 feet above the level of the sea; and from Gupis to Mastuj the road lay through heavy snow all the way. The cold was intense, the paths slippery with frozen snow, so that it was found necessary to start the advanced guard some three quarters of an hour in advance, to clear the road with pick and shovel to enable the transport mules to get along. The cold at Ghizar (10,000 feet) was very great, but a plentiful supply of Balaclava caps and snow goggles specially sent up from Gilgit, overtook the detachment. Blankets had to be torn up and wrapped round the men's feet to cross the Shandaur Pass. At Langar, at the foot of the Pass, the cold was such that water froze in Townshend's tent, though there was a stove alight, and iron was *sticky* and burned the fingers! The Shandaur Pass was crossed from Langar to the Chitral side in five hours, and Mastuj was reached on the 25th, eleven days from the start from Gupis.

Mr. Robertson, the British Agent, who was with the little force, decided to stop one whole day at Mastuj to rest the men, and moved on to Chitral on January 27th.

Mastuj Fort is situated in the middle of a sloping plain between the Yarkhun and the Laspur rivers. It is in the usual style of a Chitral fort, a square structure of mud and stone with high towers at the angles. It has been used by us as a post since the spring of 1893, a company under a British officer forming the garrison. The place is in a very tumble-down condition and has certainly known better days. It was the residence of Afzul-ul-Mulk, in 1886, when Sir William Lockhart's Mission visited Chitral, and that Prince received the General here with much hospitality. But now, oh! *Tempora mutantur!* The British subalterns are quartered in what used to be Afzul-ul-Mulk's Zenana, the *appartements intimes* of his wife (a lady much celebrated even in Chitral for her beauty), and the old rooms with their carved wood pillars resound with shouts and noisy arguments between the British officer and his Indian servant. . . .

Mr. Robertson was accompanied by Captain Campbell, Central India Horse, and an escort as follows:—150 men of the 4th Kashmir Rifles under Captain Townshend; 33 men of the 14th Sikhs under Lieut. Harley and Surgeon-Major Whitchurch. The force marched in two detachments, and was met on the way by Shujah-ul-Mulk, the little brother of Amir-ul-Mulk, a dignified little lad of about 14 years of age.

On the following day a letter was received from Gurdon at Chitral saying that Umra Khan was on the warpath, and had defeated the Chitralis in front of Drosh. On that day the force halted at Buni, and on the 29th marched from Buni to Barnas, 20 miles over very bad road, arriving at Barnas at 8 p.m.

When we got in, the men were very tired but no one fell out, and as soon as the inlying picquet

was told off, the sentries were posted, the alarm post fixed, and the men told off to their houses. We were at liberty to get something to eat. We "dined out" with the British Agent that night on roasted fowls eaten with one's fingers; and though I have no doubt we would have preferred soup, fish, and a bird at one's club, with a glass of *that* old brandy afterwards, still the roasted fowls were not so bad. . . .

The force reached Chitral on January 31st and Lieut. Gurdon was very glad to see them, for he had passed a most anxious time. Umra Khan had defeated the Chitralis in front of Drosh, and was now investing that place and trying to cut off the water supply. At the same time there appeared to be no doubt that Amir-ul-Mulk had written to him to ask his help against the British, directly after he had killed Nizam-ul-Mulk. Umra Khan was a man with a genius for desperate measures, and had at once crossed the Larwari Pass with three or four thousand men. He was undoubtedly the most expert and enterprising soldier on the North-West Frontier. The exact nature of his relations with Amir-ul-Mulk was for a long time uncertain, but the Chitralis made no attempt to relieve Drosh. They kept a force at Zairat about six miles from Drosh and Amir-ul-Mulk remained with it.

On February 3rd, the British Agent sent two British officers to examine the Chitrali position at Zairat, and it was found to be turnable. Amir-ul-Mulk received them with pipes and tom-toms and was very polite. He was dressed in a suit of his murdered brother's—of dove-coloured silk, embroidered in gold. On the way out we passed the spot where Nizam-ul-Mulk was murdered. Amir is a stupid, dull-looking youth of about 17 or 18 years of age, who can't look one in the face,

and struck me as looking like a sulky schoolboy. One cannot understand how it was he did not give orders to murder Lieut. Gurdon as soon as Nizam was killed. Perhaps he was afraid to do it. That young officer, with only eight Sikhs as an escort, showed a steady front, saw all these cut-throats in durbar and carried on generally as if nothing had happened. . . .

Chitral Fort was a very large place, square, about eighty yards on each side with five lofty towers. Its walls were about 25 feet high, and the towers 30 feet higher again. It was on the right bank of the river which runs roughly north and south. The south and west sides were entirely hidden by gardens and trees, extremely fine chinars and some very tall poplars. It was divided into two parts, the southern containing the harem and other royal apartments. This half was the keep or redoubt, and commanded the other half.

Two of us were sent to look at the fort on February 1st, and we were shown round by the little Rajah Shujah-ul-Mulk. We were told that all the royal ladies were still in the fort, but beyond one or two sheeted bundles seen in the garden at a distance, who appeared to regard us with disfavour, no sign was given of their presence. We went over Nizam's private apartments, got up very neatly with dadoes, and so forth. A couple of photos of Captain Younghusband adorned the walls. To get to this room one has to pass along a low, dark passage, leading into a little square room lit from above. It was in this passage that Shah-ul-Mulk and his two brothers were murdered by Afzul-ul-Mulk in 1892, when he seized the throne on the death of his father, old Aman-ul-Mulk. The way he did it was this: He sent for his two brothers, Wazir-ul-Mulk and Bairam-ul-

Mulk to see him at the fort. He knew that Shah-ul-Mulk was plotting to be Mehtar, and wanted to be beforehand. He first saw Shah-ul-Mulk in the little room and was very nice to him: then said good-bye to him and Wazir and Bairam, and closed the door as they all went out. In the meantime, men had been stationed in the dark passage, and Afzul-ul-Mulk stood and listened as they cut his brothers to pieces. Their bodies were thrown out of the fort the next morning. Wazir was found to be still alive, but was instantly despatched.

A short time after this, Afzul-ul-Mulk was himself shot dead by his uncle's men, who had broken into the fort. It is said he might have escaped, and his wife begged him to do so, but he was a brave youth, and, saying it was not kingly to fly, he took a rifle and mounted one of the towers, ordered a fire to be lit to show where he was, and was at once shot through the head. The whole place reeked of murder. Amir-ul-Mulk was not content with killing Nizam, but he had the Nawab of Shogat and his three sons killed. The sons were first stripped naked and cut to pieces with tulwars, and then the Nawab was despatched himself.

## (2) THE SIEGE

Mr. Robertson, the British Agent, and his force were now all installed in possession of Chitral Fort. From the early days of February, Townshend kept his diary right through the Siege, and the best account of that heroic defence is found in its pages.

*Feb. 10 (Sunday).* The B.A. received some news this morning which caused him to order us all into the fort to-day. We are now installed in

the fort and have taken possession of the whole of it. The royal ladies have gone up to our old house. The Sikhs are in the south part of the fort in the keep, and the 4th Rifles in the north part. Told off all to their stations in case of alarm. Heard casually that the news this morning was that Drosh fort had surrendered to Umra Khan yesterday.

*Feb. 13.* Amir-ul-Mulk arrived unexpectedly at the fort and had an interview with the B.A. Little Shujah-ul-Mulk, his brother, arrived shortly afterwards. Harley tells me he hears that Amir-ul-Mulk spoke up and said in reference to the royal ladies having to leave the fort, "no such shame had ever come to Chitral before."

*March 2.* The day has been an interesting one and fraught with events. The B.A. sent for Amir-ul-Mulk, who had slept in the fort last night. All the men of importance attended the Durbar. Little Shujah-ul-Mulk was present, and sat on the left of the B.A. and Amir-ul-Mulk on the B.A.'s right; but a large empty chair was between them. Campbell, Baird and myself attended the Durbar, also Gurdon. The British Agent said he was sorry to say that Amir-ul-Mulk could not carry out the work as Mehtar, and he therefore declared that Amir-ul-Mulk was Mehtar no longer. Subject to the sanction of the Government of India, he said that Shujah was declared Mehtar. He led the little boy forward by the hand and placed him in the large chair on his right. I could not help feeling pity for Amir-ul-Mulk, although he deserves none. All the Durbar kissed the hand of Shujah-ul-Mulk. It would be impossible to surpass the grace and dignity of the little fellow, on being suddenly made King, and the way he received the homage of the headmen, or rather the

nobles. The B.A. announced in Durbar that as the Mehtar was young, he would need a council of greybeards, and that Captain Townshend was placed in charge of him as being responsible for his personal safety. After all the nobles had kissed the hand of the new Mehtar, his brother Amir-ul-Mulk (who sat speechless throughout the scene in which he was being reduced from a King to nobody) said it was good, and he got up to kiss his brother's hand, but the little man would not suffer him to do so, and rose also. We were all struck by little Shujah's grace and dignity. Then all the Chitralis present kissed the hand of the B.A.

The B.A. said that a council would be appointed to assist the Mehtar and Amir-ul-Mulk was detained as a prisoner in the Munshi's quarters with sentries outside. He had brought with him into Durbar the scoundrel who had actually murdered Nizam-ul-Mulk. I had stationed sepoys outside the door, and he was made a prisoner as soon as he left the room. The whole business was very dramatic, but we agreed that it was the best day's business that had been done by us so far.

We hear this evening that Sher Afzul has reached Ayun.

Directly the Durbar was over the young Mehtar sent men running up to Gurdon's house, where his brother and all the royal ladies were living, to secure treasure, horses, rifles, etc., and I sent 20 sepoys with them. At the same time, I collected about 30 rifles from the crowd outside the court and all their ammunition. This crowd had accompanied Amir-ul-Mulk when he came to the Durbar, but they had not been allowed in. Of course, I did this all in the name of the Mehtar. Among the rifles was the little rook rifle which I had given to Shujah-ul-Mulk at Gairut, and which his

brother had of course taken from the little boy the first night we got to Ayun.

The Mehtar held a large Durbar this afternoon. People came to salaam. Salutes were fired and the Mehtar's band played the wild march which is always played for a new Mehtar.

*March 3.* The B.A. sent off a letter to Sher Afzul to say he must either come in and salaam the new Mehtar or leave the country at once.

Letter sent from Campbell to Moberley at Mastuj. Lieut. Moberley and Fowler of the R.E. to come in at once, with 200 men, if the road Chitral-Mastuj was cut. About 4.30 news of the approach of Sher Afzul's force was brought in, and I was ordered out by Campbell with 200 men of the Kashmir Imperial Service Troops.

I threw out an advanced guard of one section under a subadar as we left the fort, sending Capt. Baird with them. Campbell ordered me to leave 50 men as reserve at Serai. He sent orders to me to hold the road from Ayun to Chitral, and accordingly I occupied the eastern spur of the fan on which the political officer's house stands, and which commands the road with a clear field of fire to the front, up to 1,000 yards. . . . Campbell ordered me to advance on a house in which they had heard Sher Afzul was. He indicated the house on the plain about a mile ahead. I had thrown out the men in extended order, and on reaching the house I saw a hamlet with walls and trees about 500 yards to my front, and I could see a lot of men among the trees and about the houses. At this moment, I heard firing to my right on the hill tops, so I concluded that the men in my front were the enemy, and giving them a section volley, I advanced. The enemy returned the fire at once and briskly. I had now 100 men, after detaching



the 50 men in reserve at the Serai, and the two sections sent off with Captain Baird. Of this hundred, I kept a couple of sections in support under two Jemadars. Colonel Jagat Singh and Major Bhikam Singh were with me. I advanced up to within 200 or 250 yards of the hamlet, getting the men as much under cover as I could, under a small stone bank. The enemy were making excellent shooting: their fire was entirely Martini and Snider, and one or two casualties took place. I determined to keep hold of the ground and keep up a fire on the village, thinking that the party on my right under Baird would come down on to this hamlet (which appeared to be the key of the enemy's position) from the high ground on my right, and that if the enemy then left the hamlet I was in a good place to fire on them as they left. However, time went on and I saw no signs of Baird, and small parties of the enemy of four or five began to overlap my left flank towards the river and were enfilading me. A few men advanced in a similar way from the hamlet keeping among the trees on the high ground, and overlapping my left flank a little, and firing so as to enfilade us. It was now 6.30, and would soon be dark, so I sent off a note to say that the enemy was overlapping me by small parties on both flanks. Captain Campbell shortly after this arrived, and said we must "rush" the village, so I gave the order to "reinforce" preparatory to making the assault, fixing bayonets and keeping up a heavy independent fire. The support did not come up. They were among some low walls 150 yards to my rear. I repeated the order several times and Captain Campbell went himself to bring them up. He was wounded just as he brought up about half a dozen men and fell, shot through the leg just above the knee. I do not think more than 16 men came up

from the support although I sent Captain Jagat Singh to fetch them after Campbell was hit. I then told Campbell I would rush the place with the men I had with me, and went round telling the men we must take the houses.

General Baj Singh had come up and joined me about half an hour before Campbell came up. I sounded the charge and we cheered as we made our rush over the bank into the open. The terrain was entirely open and devoid of cover. We were received by a very hot fire. General Baj Singh and Major Bhikam Singh both fell, shot at my side. The former was dead and the latter shot in the thigh, badly hit. The enemy's fire was naturally very close and effective at this close range of 200 yards, and all we could see were puffs of smoke from the walls of the hamlet, and glimpses of men in white turbans and clothes, and one or two white standards. Several men were hit, amongst them my orderly.

I could not get the men to charge home more than about 30 yards. All began lying down and getting what cover they could to return the enemy's fire. I tried all I could to bring the men on, but they would not move, for the fire was too hot. I got behind a tree when I found the men would not follow me, as the enemy's bullets were plugging the ground up all around us. They could easily see I was a British officer at this short distance, owing to my helmet and uniform. The men had all got their black greatcoats on, which some one (I can't find out who) had ordered them to put on before we left the fort. When I came on parade I found all the men with greatcoats on and accoutrements over them, and there was no time to take them off. Seeing it was hopeless, I ordered a retirement to our former position, and the men got back to where we had rushed from. I found

Campbell lying wounded there, with Bawani Dass, the hospital assistant, dressing his wound. Bawani Dass was soon after shot dead through the chest. I told him that we must retire, and I sang out to four or five men to lay hold of him and carry him to the rear, also the same for Bhikam Singh, who begged to be allowed to lie where he was, but I sent him off also. Then I retired the men by alternate half companies, one half of the men I ordered to keep up a hot fire on the loopholes of the hamlet, and the other half of the men ran off in twos and threes to more sheltered ground. I remained with the rear party that went off last, and when we went the show was particularly warm. Their swordsmen came running out and their riflemen ran round our flanks, firing into us on all sides.

We had a long way to go; and from all the hamlets as we approached Chitral we were fired into from orchards and houses right and left, front and rear! It was now very dark. I saw there was nothing for it but for the men to double or else none of us would reach the fort alive, and this we did. We all had to run, but the doubling was steady and the men not entirely out of hand, and I managed to rally them twice. Once I rallied the men in a small hamlet where the B.A. was also rallying his men. They were ready to stop whenever ordered. I begged the B.A. to get on his pony and go. The enemy was all round us, and dropped occasional shots into us from in front as we approached Chitral. I told him that I would manage to bring the men in. I found that they had very few rounds in their pouches, and I could not understand this, as we had no less than 120 rounds when we left the fort. As we continued our retreat across the polo ground we were fired into from the house on the spur above us, where

were first quartered, when we arrived in Chitral on February 1st. We reached the Serai all right, and here I found Harley and 50 men of the 14th Sikhs, come to cover our retreat. I halted the 4th Rifles, and directed Harley to retire slowly, covering our retreat into the fort, which was only about 600 yards away.

As soon as I reached the fort, I found Gurdon, who had been with Baird (who had been badly wounded and had been sent to the rear with Surgeon-Captain Whitchurch). But up to the present they were missing. Campbell came in with me. He got a pony on the road. We all went to our alarm posts in the fort, and I took command as Campbell was wounded. Whitchurch and 16 men came in, bringing Baird (awfully badly wounded) about 8 p.m. They had had a miraculous escape, had been fired into repeatedly, and cut off twice. They had to charge small groups of the enemy, who had tried to stop them on the road. It was most gallant of Whitchurch to bring Baird in, and he ought to get the V.C. The party of the 14th Sikhs under Harley covered the retirement into the fort most steadily and well, and although fired into, they did not return the fire, as in the dark they could not distinguish the enemy from the fugitive sepoys. The enemy were computed at 1,000 to 1,200 strong, of whom 500 had Martinis and many had Sniders. 500 of them were Umra Khan's men.

*March 4.* I wrote a confidential despatch in French for B.A. to go to Mr. Udney with regard to Chitral being disposed of to the Amir. We were engaged in demolitions in the garden of the fort, and strengthening the defences. The enemy are sniping at the fort all day from sangars on the hill sides. The fort is commanded on all sides. I am

taking every precaution I can think of. Poor Baird died this morning.

*March 5.* A letter came in from Sher Afzul this morning under a flag of truce enclosing a letter said to be from Umra Khan (which I strongly suspect to be a forgery), saying that we must leave Chitral, that he would guarantee our arrival at Gilgit, and that Sher Afzul was to be Mehtar of Chitral. With regard to ammunition, we have 280 rounds a man (Snider) for the 4th Rifles; and over 300 rounds a man for the 4th Sikhs. . . . We have two and a half month's supplies, putting everyone on half rations. This I have done. We buried poor Baird this night outside the main gate in the house that used to be the hospital.

*March 8.* Last night the enemy made a determined attempt to fire the water tower—an out-work covering the covered way to the river on the west front. All the men were at their posts; they had been made to sleep there. The enemy began firing from the trees close to the fort on the N.W. corner. The firing commenced before dawn. One of the men of the enemy managed to get entirely under the water tower and lit a huge fire, having brought up wood under cover of the darkness. I opened the water gate and let out three bheesties, who put out the fire. I gave them ten rupees each.

*March 10.* Harley came to me and offered to take six of his Sikhs to-night, swim the river and surprise the enemy's water sangar, on the other bank. I would not let him go. We have so few men—only 80 men of the 14th Sikhs, the men we rely on, and only three British officers for duty, i.e., Gurdon, Harley and myself. The Rifles, there

is no doubt, are very much shaken by their losses on the 3rd. They were tried very highly, they had never been on service before and they got the highest test possible when they had to assault a strong village (with only about 50 men) filled with enemy's riflemen, and across the open! I do not know what troops could have done it. As we cannot afford to lose a single man of the 14th Sikhs, far less a British officer, I will not have any sallying parties, unless I am obliged to, as long as I am in command. The risk is too great. This I have pointed out to the B.A. who agrees I am in the right. I am strengthening the fort every night and I mean to sit tight until we are relieved, and I am sure this is the soundest thing to do.

Our situation is certainly serious. I asked the B.A. to send a messenger to Mr. Udney, who is only five marches off. He would not do so, saying that one a week was sufficient, and they would think we were excited. There is a man in the fort called Mir Anza, who once saved Biddulph and who says he can get through. I am certain we ought to get a man through to Udney at any cost, and Gurdon agrees with me: but the B.A. no doubt knows best. I wanted to send a messenger through to the Senior British officer on the road, pointing out the different bad places on the road between here and Mastuj, and where they would most likely have to fight, and fight hard. He said that was a matter for the troops coming up, who would get all information, and that he wanted to keep all messengers he had in case of straits.

*March 15.* A flag of truce and a letter from Sher Afzul to-day, a very moderate and reasonable letter I believe. He said the people of Chitral

had chosen him as Mehtar, and he repeated he wanted to be friendly with the British Government. Before this letter arrived from Sher Afzul, Gurdon and I had a long and serious talk. We both came to the conclusion that we are in a very serious position, that relief from Gilgit is doubtful as (1) no transport can be got on the road, (2) no supplies, (3) hardly any troops at Gilgit, no more than 800 or 900 rifles at the most could be sent, (4) it is not unlikely that Yasin, Ghizar and Mastuj are rising or at least getting very excited. We came to the conclusion that our only chance is a relief column from Peshawur. What on earth Mr. Udney is doing one cannot even conjecture.

*March 16.* A flag of truce from the enemy at 4 p.m. Sher Afzul forwarded a letter from Lt. Edwardes at Reshun to the B.A. as well as a long letter from himself to the B.A. and I believe a petition from the headman of Chitral, saying they want Sher Afzul as Mehtar. Edwardes and Fowler of the R.E., with a party of 20 Sappers and 40 Rifles, had been attacked just this side of Reshun. They had retired and entrenched themselves at Reshun. Had lost six men killed and six men wounded. They had concluded a truce with the enemy, after fighting three days. They had no rations and had to make a sortie whenever they wanted water. Stores and ammunition were safe. Edwardes says the Pathans with the Chitralis offered a truce. Sher Afzul's foster-brother and a lot of Chitralis came and had a parley. Edwardes went to meet them to hear what they had to say, they said they desired peace with the British and that the B.A. at Chitral had made peace with Sher Afzul. Edwardes added a post-script to say they could not hold out if attacked.

A large force was around them. The letter was partly in French.

The B.A. appeared thunderstruck at getting Edwardes' letter. He did not show it at first, when I asked him to do so, but he did so afterwards. Sher Afzul's letter and the headmen's petition he kept confidential.

A truce of three days has been agreed on both sides. Sher Afzul has hoisted a white flag on the tower of Gurdon's house and we have hoisted one on the big tower of the fort. The B.A. talking to me this evening said he did not mind his plans having failed, the only thing he regretted was the death of poor Baird. He said that of course he must sacrifice everything for the lives of Edwardes and Fowler and their party, and we must get out of this business as honourably as we can. The wounded with Edwardes' party will be sent back to Mastuj under flag of truce, I hear.

*March 18.* Rumour that Sher Afzul is practically a prisoner in the hands of the Khans. Truce continues.

*March 19.* The old Queen, Shujah-ul-Mulk's mother, sent a man under the fort to call out a message to the little Mehtar to say that the Chitralis had been beaten by the British who were advancing, and saying that we should not leave the fort. Two very conciliatory letters came in, one from Sher Afzul, and one from the Khan who is in command. They said the two British officers would be here to-morrow. We fear there has been treachery and that all Edwardes' and Fowler's party have been massacred. Personally, I do not believe it. We sent Munshi Amir Ali to see Edwardes and Fowler. They are being well taken care of, surrounded by a lot of men. The Munshi only allowed to converse in Hindustani. Only 12



sepoys remain, out of a total of 60! Could any situation be more serious than this, now that the enemy have two British officers in their hands?

*March 21.* I am sorry to say that the men of the Rifles are now pretty well useless. Their officers appear helpless and give no orders. One cannot trust them to do anything. I have to get Gurdon or Harley or myself to superintend the smallest duty. As for the N.C.O.'s—words fail me to describe them! The men are dirty and slovenly and do not obey orders with alacrity. The fact is they are utterly dazed, I think, with the dusting they got on March 3rd, and are decidedly "not for it" any longer. All the best men appear to have been hit, and to all appearances the useless, worn out, decrepit old devils whom I had left at Gilgit, appear to flourish well and creep about to their posts like old women. I have talked to the officers, and appealed to them not to lose altogether the good discipline and smartness always maintained at Gupis formerly. I would like to have the detachment fall in and curse them all, *mais ce n'est pas le moment*. They're dazed enough as it is, and I must try to improve matters gradually but I have no time to do this now I am O.C.

*March 22.* Little Rajah Shujah-ul-Mulk remains in the fort. He is well, and I like him very much. I see him every day, and we have long and friendly conversations. He is a good lad of about 14 years of age, I think, and makes a good comrade. There are 25 Chitralis with us in the damned fort. At nightfall I mount a guard of four sepoy over the Chitralis quarters. There are also seven or eight Chitrali women in the fort, who are the daughters or wives (I don't know which) of Bahadur Khan, Fatch Ali Shah, etc. They live

in a large room close to the mess of us officers, and we can hear their cries and their merry laughs and their whisperings. It is a rather a nuisance to be a witness of their *vie intime*.

The B.A. has told me all about the capture of Edwardes and Fowler. It was a truce, as Edwardes said. On the day after the truce was declared the Chitralis invited the two officers to a game of polo. When they appeared they were at once knocked down and bound. That to me is not a surprising matter. As for the sepoys, it is said that the enemy killed 35 of them and the rest are slaves. All the munitions of war and the "gun cotton" are in their hands. Such a stupid affair has never been heard! Does not all the world know of the treachery of Asiatics? How will these officers explain the fact that they left their sepoys, and quitted the post where they had been barricaded and besieged in a little house for six days, to see a game of polo at the invitation of the enemy.

It is rumoured to-night that the Gilgit force has reached Mastuj, and that the people of Mastuj and Ghizar are our friends.

An envoy from Umra Khan visited the B.A. to-day. They desire that we should retire via Jandol and Peshawur. This is very amusing! This envoy is a Hindoo scoundrel. I believe he hinted to the B.A. that the two officers in their hands would be killed if we did not consent to retreat from Chitral by the indicated road. I believe the B.A. replied that we would remain in the fort.

*March 23.* The envoy from Umra Khan came back for a reply as to our leaving the fort for Peshawur. The B.A. gave him a short reply and the envoy said that the flag of truce would be lowered that night. As a fact the enemy did lower

their white flag and we lowered ours. Rain incessant.

*March 24.* Incessant rain. There is nothing for the horses to eat, so we eat the horses.

*March 25.* Rain falls in sheets. From time to time a piece of the wall falls down, crumbled by the moisture. Everything in the fort is soaked. Mud, stinks, dirt, all the result of the incessant rain. Our tobacco is all finished and cheroots only exist in the imagination. No whisky. No liqueurs. Nothing! By order of the little Rajah Shujah-ul-Mulk (who thinks that too much rain is coming down), a prayer has been written out in Persian and stuck on the end of a lance on the ramparts. To our astonishment the rain ceased all at once.

*March 29.* We made a Union Jack and hoisted it on the big tower.

As usual Townshend was ever on the look out to strengthen the fort in every way. Each day he inspected the towers and walls, putting in stones and strong timbers where he considered they were too thin, especially in the water tower, which the enemy would naturally attack first.

*March 30.* Mir Hamza, who once saved Major Biddulph's life, made an attempt to carry a letter through for us to either Mr. Udney or to Peshawur. He failed and ran back into the fort, as the enemy's cordon was too strong for him. I believe he is going to try again, swimming down stream.

*March 31.* The Kashmir Brigade-Major, who has been simply funking for the last ten days under the excuse of fever, was sent for by me this morning. I asked him somewhat rudely

when he proposed to do any duty, as the Medical Officer had reported in the last three days to us that he was well, and had no fever. I told him that this was not the time for a fever. We British officers had no time to get ill, and I told him to go on duty at once. He looked utterly *ahuri* and said: "It is as the Protector pleases."

The B.A. said to me in conversation that he thought he could settle the Chitralis alone, if the Pathans went. (I do not agree with him in the least, after the action of March 3rd.) He said that we might rush two sangars in front of the fort, and then might go up the ridge to the west of the fort! (Up the ridge? Why? What to do but come down again? And all this with only 170 men available.) The B.A. went on to say, as I did not reply (not wishing to come to a misunderstanding) that he thought it was our duty to do something to help those coming up to help us. I said we might sally out, of course, *when we saw the relieving column*, but that we only had 170 men available. He said we must think what others would think of us! I told him straight that we had done our duty and would continue to do it: that I did my duty, and what I thought to be sound, and did not care what anybody said.

*April 2.* The relieving force should be moving about now from Mastuj. The men passing from Mastuj way, and the flocks of sheep and goats that have followed, may mean that a relief is coming from Mastuj, or concentrating there. I ordered a tot of rum for every man of the stable, and water picquets coming off duty from night. They must have had a bad time.

I asked the B.A. if he would have the walls in front of the main gate, which he would not allow

me to knock down, loopholed to-day, or something done. He replied that he had not made up his mind.

*April 3.* The rations and food in the fort are now getting very low. The officers have been living on horseflesh since March 22nd. Ghee has given out, which is serious for the sepoys; ghee being to a native soldier of India what meat is to a European. Only a little rum left. I have ordered a dram of rum for the Sikhs per man every fourth day, and a quarter of an ounce of tea per man for the Kashmir rifles every other day, and I hope to try and keep the sick list from getting any larger, for another three weeks at least. What will happen in the way of sickness when it gets hot I do not know, or care to reflect upon much: the stench in this awful fort are simply appalling already. How the men in the stable picquet do not all get ill, coming off duty, I can't imagine. I feel sick every time I go to the stables to inspect the picquet. We have no more tobacco left.

*April 7.* About 5.20 a.m. the enemy managed to set fire to the Gun Tower in a very clever way, running up and placing bundles of faggots and wood against the tower and wall. The affair looked very serious. I sent up most of the inlying picquet to the fire, utilising their greatcoats to put earth in: sent up all the bheesties and every Puniyali I could get hold of, and eventually the fire was got under with great difficulty. I heard the B.A. had been wounded up in the tower, the bullet having got through a loophole. The enemy showed great enterprise in creeping up to the tower and laying the fire against the foot.

I always sleep in the middle of the day, never at night. We stand to our arms always an hour

before dawn, falling in every man at his post at 4.45 a.m. and continue there till broad daylight. I do not think it would be possible for me to take more precautionary measures than I do. Heaps of earth and water in each tower, top room and base: some along parapets, mackintosh sheets of the 14th Sikhs utilised to hold water and all the bheesties sleep with full mussacks of water: fire picquet and heaps of earth and water in the courtyard.

*April 10.* Enemy very quiet last night. Moon lit up fort at 10 p.m. and sank behind the western hill at 5.30 a.m. Gurdon and I had tea together upon the parapet, as all the men stood to their arms at 4.45 a.m. and watched the dawn break. Titichmir, a hog-backed shaped snow mountain (2,600 feet), looks very imposing and solemn to the north.

They shot my poor dog "Ghazi" through the body this morning as he strayed out below the stables and in front of their lower sangar. If no bones are broken I hope he will live. He was hit through the loose skin of the stomach five days ago from the same sangar, the bullet being still in him, but he was almost recovered from this.

*April 13.* I have had to tell the O.C. Kashmir Rifles that a sentry found sleeping at his post means that the man will be tried by Court Martial and sentenced to death. We are not safe with this damned regiment. They seem utterly callous as to what happens.

*April 17.* Enemy had the usual tom-toms going in the Nizam's summer-house in the garden. Thinking that possibly this nightly band may be for drowning the noise of the picks, as they might try to mine towards the tower or port wall, I

warned the sentries in the Gun Tower, and also the sentries in the Tambour at Main Gate, as they might be mining underneath the North Tower. At midnight the sentry in the lower room of the Gun Tower reported the noise of a pick in the direction of Nizam's summer-house. I went up to the tower and listened intently for some time, but could hear no noise (Umra Khan, I believe, took a couple of forts in his part of the world by mining, and may well have put the Chitralis up to this). About 11 a.m. the officer in the Gun Tower sent down to me to say that he heard knocking as of a mine. I went into the lower storey of the Tower, and could distinctly hear the sound of a man picking under the ground close to the Tower. I asked the B.A. to come up and listen, and we both agreed it was a mine from the summer-house, and quite close, so no time was to be lost. I decided to make a sally and capture the summer-house, where the shaft of the mine would be, and then destroy it. There was no time to counter-mine.

I told off Lieut. Harley and 40 men of the 14th Sikhs, and Major Bhagwan Singh and a subadar and 60 men of the 4th K. R. Gave the following instructions to Harley:—

1. Rush the place. No firing. Bayonet only.
2. Take a prisoner or two, if possible.
3. Three powder bags, powder fuse and matches for blowing in their mine. Mine shaft probably inside the house. Picks and spades.
4. Go straight for the gap in the house wall. No dividing your party. No support.



*From the drawing by R. Caton Woodville,  
Published in the Century Magazine.*

THE SOTTIE FROM CHITRAI





5. Having taken the place, place as many men as necessary to hold it towards the bazaar.
6. Place men to watch the garden wall. Set to work with the remainder to destroy the mine and the building.
7. No hurry. If the sangar in front of garden gate of fort annoys you, send some men round in rear of it, first sounding the "cease fire" twice, to warn us of your intentions, so also that I can stop the fire from our parapet on to the sangar.

I sent for all the officers going with Harley, and in his presence explained to them clearly the object of the sally. They must, I said, explain it to the N.C.O.'s and they in their turn must explain it to the men as, in the affairs of this kind, it is essential that every man in the party should know the object of the venture, for he might be the only man left to carry it out.

At 4 p.m. I opened the door, and the party rushed out, heading straight for the Nizam's summer-house. A few straggling shots met them, killing two of the 4th Kashmir Rifles, and few seconds sufficed for the whole party to get into the house through the gap. About 40 Pathans and others were there, who all hastily fled, two of them being shot. The men who fled went down the wall of the garden towards the river, and began to throw up one of their clever fascine sangars at right angles to the garden wall to bar further progress of ours in that direction, and they kept up a well sustained rifle fire on our men in the little house. The mine shaft was found close to the house, and 35 Chitralis were bayoneted as they appeared out of the rabbit-burrow-like mine.

Harley counted 35 bodies. Two prisoners were taken. In the meantime we were keeping a lively fire from the parapets: men came running into the Jemadar's house, and several were running away towards the bazaar. It was several times reported to me from the Tower that a considerable number of the enemy were making towards the river and gathering close to our stables. I withdrew a few Sikhs from the parapet, putting them in the East Tower and garden front to support the stables. I sent three different messengers to Harley to hurry up, informing him of the enemy gathering behind the garden wall, telling him, though, to devote all his attention to smashing the mine. Soon after 5 p.m. I heard the noise of an explosion and Harley's men came running in at the gate under a very sharp fire from the enemy. Several men were hit at this time, but the party got in all right. Total casualties 8 men killed, and 13 wounded out of a total of 100 men. The result of the explosion in the mine was most happy, though the thing was pure luck, as the powder bags (110 lbs.) went off before the arrangements were ready. . . . However, I found on going up to the Gun Tower that the explosion of the powder gas in the mine had burst out the whole mine, and there it is like a ditch, all open from the summer-house up to within eight or nine feet of the tower wall. So the result of the day's work was most admirable, and could not have been better if we had had Engineer officers. I feel very glad, and have proved I was right in refusing to make any useless sorties before. We compute the enemy's loss at about 50 or 60. 35 to 40 were bayoneted as they came out of the mine, a heavy fire being delivered by Harley's men into the Pathans and Chitralis at very close quarters. The North and Flag Towers

accounted for eight men by their rifle fire. Quite 60 of the enemy must have been placed *hors de combat*, and as a rule none of their wounded recover, for their "hakim," we hear, stuffs raw meat into a wound to heal it! Harley did the business very well indeed.

The two prisoners taken were interrogated by the B.A. this evening and gave the following information: One of them was an old man who said he had been brought to Chitral from Shogut that very day: that the enemy had intended to set fire to our Water Tower, but that they had waited first to see the result of the mine on our Gun Tower. The explosion was to have taken place to-morrow night (so we were just in time). He said no other mines had been in contemplation. He said that a skirmish had taken place between British troops, who had come from Mastuj, at Nasgol about five days ago: that the people said the British had got the worst of the skirmish, and had retired, and that the machine gun had not worked properly. The Sher Afzul (who was still at Chitral) had sent a lot of men to assist Mohammed Isa at Nasgol. He didn't know how many, but a lot, and that Sher Afzul had sent to Umra Khan to send him 2,000 men to help him.

The second prisoner (a young chap) said that a few days ago, while Mohammed Isa was besieging Mastuj, 200 British troops and 300 Hunza Nagar and Punyal levies had arrived there, and that Mohammed Isa had retired to Nasgol between Sanghar and Mastuj.

*April 19.* Last night about 3 a.m., Gurdon, who had the middle watch, came and reported to me at the Quarter Guard, where I am sleeping, that a man was calling out outside the fort that he had important news to tell us. The man proved

to be Roostum, a brother of Fatch Ali Shah. He called out that Sher Afzul had bolted and that the Gilgit relieving force had reached Pret, this side of Bamas . . . I let the man into the fort and told the B.A. In the morning we found Chitral deserted: sent a reconnoitring party out under Gurdon up to Sher Afzul's house, who reported no one in sight. Rumours also of a force approaching from Peshawur.

It was a very dramatic situation in the night, when we heard that we were at last relieved. Gurdon and I went and acquainted the little Mehtar Shujah-ul-Mulk and I shook hands with the little boy and felt very glad, as I am very fond of him. All the Chitralis were around him calling him "Mubarik." Delight on all sides. The sepoys are awfully glad. I put them on full rations, and we got in sheep and goats and ghee and eggs. Most of the people are hiding up the *nullah*, as they are afraid of our vengeance for the treachery at Reshun, etc.

The Pathan merchants have told us that our force from Peshawur had taken Dir, and even crossed the Lowari Pass. Imagine our relief now! The Siege had lasted 46 days.

*April 20.* Letter in the night from Colonel Kelly, dated at Kogazai. His force consists of 400 Pioneers, 100 4th Rifles, 100 Hunza Nagar levies. He reaches Chitral at midday to-day, he says. Difficulties of transport great. 1,400 men under Sir Robert Lowe working from Peshawur to Chitral. Brigades under Kinloch and Gatacre. Kelly goes on to say that the enemy have killed 100 of the Gilgit force, including the party with Edwardes and Fowler, also Captain Ross and 40 of the 14th Sikhs. Colonel Kelly has fought two actions, defeating the Chitralis under Mohammed

Isa near Mastuj. We lost 4 killed and 16 wounded only.

Letter this morning for the B.A. from Lt. Davis, Assistant Political Officer with the Peshawur relief force, dated at Ashreth (about ten miles from Kila Drosh), so that a part of them must have passed the Lowari Pass. He said in his letter that various causes had delayed the relief column. The messenger informed us that Mohammed Sherif Khan, who accompanied the Peshawur force, took Kila Drosh yesterday, the Jamdolis bolting. With any luck, Sher Afzul should now be captured. The bazaar rumours here are that our troops took Dir yesterday. Umra Khan should now be a fugitive.

This is a splendid move on the part of the Government. It quite restores our prestige, and will moreover raise it very much. Nothing so good as this has been done for many years, and for some time it should keep the whole frontier quiet. Sent a letter to Lady St. Levan, to my cousin Agnes\* and also to Lord Townshend—by dak.

Colonel Kelly's column arrived at 2 to-day. The Pioneers looked very fit. The officers with Kelly were: Captain Borrodale, Lieut. Petersen, Lieut. Cobb, Lieut. Bethune; and all of the Pioneers, and Lieut. Oldham, R.E.

A sepoy of the Rifles with Colonel Kelly's force is the sole survivor of the party with Fowler and Edwardes, who were massacred at Reshun.

#### FAREWELL ORDER OF THE BRITISH AGENT TO HIS ESCORT

Consequent of the retreat of the Jandol Khans and Sher Afzul on the night of the 18th and the near approach of Colonel Kelly with the Gilgit Force, the Siege of Chitral came to an end. The

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\*Lady Agnes Townshend—afterwards Lady Agnes Durham.

British Agent's escort now comes under the command of Colonel Kelly, commanding the Gilgit Force. In bidding good-bye to the troops who so gallantly held the Chitral Fort against overwhelming numbers and unprecedented conditions, the British Agent desires to place on record his appreciation of the admirable manner with which all ranks fought and worked and cheerfully endured terrible hardships. Their bravery and fortitude were beyond all praise, while the discipline remained unimpaired. The soldiers of the Queen Empress and those of H.H. the Maharajah of Kashmir fought side by side with splendid devotion and with admirable comradeship and the British Agent will ever remember with gratitude and heart-felt emotion their heroic valour and resolution.

Townshend arrived at Simla about June 14th, 1895, and put up at the Club. While in Simla he dined with Sir George White, C.-in-Chief, and lunched with the Viceroy. "I saw Sir Henry Brackenbury," he writes, "who was most kind and congratulated me, 'Not only on getting your opportunity, but in taking it, which so many fail to do.' The defence of Chitral Fort is compared to that of Lucknow. What made me more proud than anything else was that the Colonel of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry had ordered his officers *to study* the defence of Chitral!"

## CHAPTER VI

### ENGLAND: ON LEAVE

TOWNSHEND was of course much fêted by London society when he returned from Chitral. Society always does like a "lion" of sorts, and here was a real lion who had held out stoutly to the end, amid the most formidable difficulties that might have appalled a much older soldier. Nor was the Hunza Nagar affair to be forgotten.

In more ways than one Townshend was still a thorough boy, though he had passed his thirty-fourth year and seen more service than many a much older man. His letters describing the round of dinners, and the lavish way he was welcomed by Society, are delightfully boyish in the outspoken delight at his enjoyment of it all.

His cousins, the St. Aubyns, were in London when he arrived, and they were naturally delighted to see him, as was Lady Audrey Buller. Shortly after his arrival, he was dining at 29 Bruton Street, and Sir Redvers Buller told him that he would shortly be a Companion of the Bath, and a Brevet Major. The latter promotion duly appeared in the *London Gazette* for July 16th.

I was sent for by the Duke of Cambridge at the War Office, also by Lord Lansdowne same day, and they asked me all about Chitral. Lord Lansdowne asked me much about the question of the retention of Chitral, and I said I thought that one battalion of infantry (a British Indian regiment) and one mountain battery were sufficient to hold Chitral—this force to be fed



from Mastuj and Gilgit, and that road being held by two or three fortified posts, and that one could keep the Chitral, Dir, and Peshawur road open by subsidising the tribesmen in the same way that we keep open the Khyber Pass. The old Duke was very nice to me, shook hands, and made me sit down beside him, and asked all about the Sikhs with me in the garrison of Chitral Fort. He appeared to me to be very old but quite clear in his intellect, and vigorous. He complimented me very much. I also met Lord George Hamilton at dinner at Sir Redvers Buller's, and he had a long talk with me about Chitral. I also met Lord Roberts at a dance at Lady Halsbury's and he took me aside and said: "Mind you vote the right way about our retaining Chitral!" And I voted the right way! Both Sir George White and General Brackenbury, out in India, were strongly in favour of retaining Chitral, as was Lord Roberts at home. But Sir Redvers Buller was dead against it. I was talking to him one night after dinner in the smoking room at 29 Bruton Street, and he said he could not understand how Sir George White could be so strongly in favour of retaining Chitral. He, Sir Redvers, could understand our holding Chitral if we held Cabul and Candahar, as it was all in one line if one looked at a map, but to hold Chitral and not Cabul and Candahar was what he, Sir Redvers, could not understand. However, of course, he gave no official opinion on the question of retaining Chitral, as his position as Adjutant-General precluded that. Lord George Hamilton was for holding Chitral, and we now know that Chitral is to be held and occupied by our troops—a Battalion and one or two maxims and mountain guns in Chitral itself (Drosh and Chitral), and a brigade in the Malakand. I myself, as far as my opinion is worth anything, think

that it was a mistake to go to Chitral in the first place, but for that the Political Authorities were answerable. But having gone there, and fought, we could not recede and it was right to retain Chitral.

I met George Curzon in London (the new Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), and dined there. I took him afterwards with me to a supper I had at the Savoy to which I had asked Arthur Roberts (the great actor), General Kitchener (the Sirdar of the Egyptian Army), Younghusband (the explorer), Bean St. Aubyn, Lord Tullibardine, Campbell, Sir Saville Crossley; and a very merry supper party it was! I had met Arthur Roberts first of all at a luncheon at Lady Jeune's.

Townshend was summoned by the Prince of Wales to Marlborough House:

He was very nice to me, shook hands and made me sit down. He talked little about Chitral but a deal about my cousin the Marquis Townshend, and the Townshend affairs. He said in the course of conversation that if I was keen on a transfer to the Guards, he himself would do his best to help me in the matter. I referred the matter to Sir Redvers Buller, who said that to go to the Guards would be suicidal in my case. I must keep on now in my own line, stick to India and get on the staff there.

I was also sent for by the Queen at Osborne to lunch, and Her Majesty pinned on my C.B. afterwards. Sir Fleetwood Edwardes took me in to the Queen and I knelt down on one knee whilst she pinned it on, with the Princess Beatrice standing by. After she had pinned it on, I held my left arm across my body, and the Queen placed her hand on my arm and I kissed it. She then

talked to me for a few minutes, and said she hoped my health was all right now, and asked after the wounded.

The Queen who, as is well known, had a great weakness for all Highland regiments, also asked Townshend if he did not think the Highlanders were the finest soldiers in the world. Townshend was rather taken aback by such a direct question, but managed to murmur something about his being a Norfolk man and having a great appreciation of English soldiers. "And then," as he said, "there was a silence, for the Queen uttered not a word more, and in the words of Arthur Roberts, 'you might have heard a mangle drop!'"

I dined the following Wednesday with the Queen at Osborne, and slept there. The Duke of Alba and myself were the only guests at the Castle. The following were at dinner:—The Queen, Princess Beatrice, Princess Louise, Duchess of Connaught, Marquis of Lorne, General Sir John McNeill in attendance, Lord Edward Cecil, Lady Erroll, Miss Phipps and myself. The dinner was in the Indian room, which is the most handsome apartment I have seen. A Spanish troupe of mandolines and guitars played during dinner, and we conversed as at an ordinary dinner-party. Our dress was ordinary evening dress, coat with miniatures and orders, knee breeches of same cloth as the coat, black silk stockings and pumps, white tie and black waistcoat. I had a long talk with Princess Louise after dinner (whilst the band played and a Spanish girl danced), and also with the Duchess of Connaught who remembered me in India at Rawal Pindi, when the Duke of Connaught was in command there. The Queen also talked to me for about ten minutes about the privations we had undergone in Chitral Fort

during the siege. I had a long talk in the smoking room that night with the Marquis of Lorne. He spoke of my ancestor George, the first Marquis Townshend, who took command at the battle on the Heights of Abraham, when Wolfe was mortally wounded. Townshend was Second-in-Command to Wolfe, and Quebec surrendered to him. I thought it was very nice of the Marquis of Lorne to speak about that to me. I left the Castle in the morning and went straight down to Cornwall.

But perhaps what pleased him best of all the entertainments given in his honour were the dinners offered to him by comrades who had fought with him in previous campaigns. The officers of the Guards who were with him in the Camel Corps in the earlier Sudan expedition, asked him to dinner at the Bachelors' Club, and considering that he was not a Guardsman himself he felt especially proud of this invitation.

On his way down to Cornwall his old Corps, the Royal Marines, gave him a dinner in the Marine mess at Plymouth, and he was carried round the mess shoulder high afterwards. One can imagine how his boyish nature appreciated that. This was the Division of Marines to which he had first been gazetted on receiving his commission in 1881.

After a series of country house visits, he returned to London. Every night at this time he dined either with Lady Halsbury or with Lady Jeune,\* meeting at the hospitable house of the last-named many of the best-known actors and actresses of the day.

Townshend was an inveterate playgoer. He seldom missed a night at the theatre unless he was obliged to go to a big dinner somewhere. His criticisms are instructive as to his tastes. Of "Trilby" he says: "a much overrated play, I think." At the St. James's

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\*Afterwards Lady St. Helier.

he only has a remark on the beauty of Evelyn Mil-  
lard. He goes to see "Gentleman Joe" 18 times, for  
his favourite, Arthur Roberts, was in the caste, and  
his knowledge of the Alhambra before and behind  
the scenes must have been like Sam Weller's know-  
ledge of London, "extensive and peculiar."

*Nov. 30.* Went down to Hertford to stay at  
Balls Park, Lord Townshend's place near Hert-  
ford, which is rented by Mr. Faudel Phillips, an  
Alderman of the City of London. The beautiful  
old place has not altered a bit, and everything  
looks the same to me as I remembered it fifteen  
years ago, when I last went down there, with Lord  
and Lady Townshend. It was just before I got my  
commission in the Marines. The Phillips were  
very kind indeed to me, and I spent all day Sunday  
going about the house and grounds. It is most  
awfully sad to think of it all. A splendid old  
family like ours, and Lord Townshend cannot  
now afford to live either at Raynham Hall in  
Norfolk, which is let to Sir Edmund Lacon, or at  
Balls Park, let to Mr. Phillips; and from what I  
heard from Lord St. Levan the other day, Balls  
Park will have to be sold and most of the land at  
Raynham as well. To think of it all, and last  
century there was no family more powerful than  
ours! The whole thing is too heartbreaking. I  
thought of all this coming back from Hertford to  
London on Monday, and I wonder if ever I shall  
be able to be the means of restoring some of the  
old prestige to the family. I have always hoped  
so, and made that my one aim, as all my letters  
to Lady St. Levan for years past would show.

*Dec. 6.* "Curly" Stewart arrived this after-  
noon, and I went to see him at Leinster Gardens.  
... Went with Sir George Thomas and Mr.  
Tully to see the preparations at Olympia for

"Chitral," which they propose to open on January 2nd. The scene painter asked me if I wasn't Major Townshend. I told him: "Yes, but how did you know?" He said he recognised me from the portrait in Younghusband's book.

But in the midst of all this gaiety his heart was still wrapped up in his own profession, and his delight may be imagined when he received on January 7th the following telegram from General Sir Herbert Kitchener,\* commanding the Egyptian Army:—

Can offer command battalion if you come to Egypt February 23rd. You to arrange Indian Government am sending application home Kitchener.

This was exactly what he had been hoping for. Kitchener's long prepared campaign against the Khalifa was at hand, and he was to be in the midst of it.

By means of repeated telegrams to the Government of India, and applications to the India Office and the pulling of strings by Sir Redvers Buller, General Gordon and others, he obtained the coveted permission to go to Egypt; it was not till January 29th—three weeks after his first application—that the matter was finally arranged. But he did not leave London for Cairo until February 11th.

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\* Afterwards Earl Kitchener.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUDAN: THE ADVANCE TO DONGOLA

HE reached Alexandria on February 20th, and took the train at once to Cairo. He had wired his arrival to the Adjutant, Egyptian Army, and was met at the station by an officer who took him back to his own house to stay. Then follows the usual note: "His wife is very nice."

*Feb. 21, 1896.* I am 34 to-day. Reported myself to General Sir Herbert Kitchener, commanding Egyptian Army; also to General Knowles, commanding British Army of Occupation in Egypt. General Kitchener informed me I was posted to the command of the 12th Sudanese Regiment, now at the outpost of Sarras, 35 miles south of Wady Halfa—the most advanced post towards the enemy in the Sudan. General Kitchener congratulated me on getting the command of about the best regiment in the Egyptian Army, and he said he wanted me to go up the Nile and join as soon as I could, as there was a rumour that the Dervishes were going to attack us at Halfa. I can't get off before next Friday as no steamer will be going from Assouan to Halfa, if I go before then.

*Feb. 24.* Lunched at Lord Cromer's. Lady Cromer told me that Lady Jeune had written to her about me. In the afternoon I was presented to the Khedive at the Abdin Palace. He is a young chap of about 21 or 22, enormously stout, and talks English very well. He was very nice to me, and said he hoped I should remain in his army a long time. A dance at the Continental Hotel

to-night. Crowded with people. Very well done. Lots of pretty women: and the red and blue uniforms of the British officers gave it a colouring. Major Macdonald\* of the Egyptian Army dined with me to-night. He goes with me on Friday night as Second-in-Command of the frontier force at Halfa.

*Feb. 25.* Dined at General Kitchener's. Lady Charles Beresford was there and talked a lot to me about Lady Jeune and Madeline and Dorothy Stanley. The Italian Consul General (a young chap) and his smart-looking wife were there; Stuart-Wortley and his wife; Major Maxwell and his wife; Lord and Lady Ruthven and Mr. Alonzo Money, Captain Watson and Major Macdonald, both of the E. A.

*Feb. 27.* Tried on my uniform this morning. The uniform for British officers in the Egyptian Army is very smart: a dark blue tunic (full dress with plastron), and black mohair cords looping across the tunic horizontally. Black shoulder cords, but gold shoulder cords for review order. Gold laced overalls. The undress jacket is dark blue serge, overalls with a broad red stripe being worn with this. The tarboosh worn on all occasions. The mess kit—blue roll collar mess jacket, with gold lace of rank on cuffs. As Kaimakan or Lieut.-Colonel I wear four stripes of gold on the cuff worked into an "Austrian" knot, a white waistcoat and gold laced overalls, with miniature medals in a bar across the lapel of the jacket. Went to see Slatin Pasha this afternoon. Laid up with a bad knee, his horse having come down with him on the asphalt. Slatin was very glad to see me. I told him I had read his book, "Fire and Sword in the Sudan," with great interest. He is now in the

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\* Hector Macdonald, who rose from the ranks of the Gordon Highlanders,



Intelligence Department of the War Office under Major Wingate. Wingate told me that he had written the book for Slatin, as he had done the one for Father Ohrwalder.\*

*Feb. 29. En route* for Assiout on a post boat crowded with excursionists going up to Assouan, and had to put up with a dirty little cabin in the steerage. Reported the matter to Cook, who had been warned that there were places wanted for officers on the boat.

When they reached Korosko on March 5th, they heard the terrible news of the Italian disaster at Adowa. The rumour went that the Italians had been entirely defeated by the Abyssinians, and had experienced a loss of 3,000 killed and sixty guns. Barartieri, the Italian commander, was said to have shot himself. This was anything but good news for the British, as the victory would doubtless have the effect of encouraging the natives still more to greater efforts. Arrived at Sarras on March 7th, Townshend at once set about making himself acquainted with the troops which he was to command.

After being introduced to the native officers, I went round with McKerrill to inspect the post as regards defensive arrangements. I inspected the two companies who go into Wady Halfa by the train to-day—both of 100 men in marching order. I am very pleased with the physique of the men. They are fine strapping blacks, mostly tall. I felt quite small inspecting them. The drummers and buglers are very good indeed, and the drummers have all the business of drummers in the "Guards," raising their sticks, etc. I have never seen a more solid lot than these men, and they swung along to the train to the tune of

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\* The Catholic priest so long a captive in the Sudan.

"Under the Double Eagle," I felt I had a stroke of luck in getting command of this regiment. I have taken as my orderly Lance-Corporal, Osman Tarag, the man who deserted from the enemy after the battle of Abu Klea. He talked Italian then and still does. He had been with Hicks when his force had been annihilated, and was made to take service with the Mahdi. I remember well Colonel Ivor Herbert of the Guards was told off to examine him; he being the only man who could talk Italian. He is a tall, finely built young black.

Entries in the diary often show what personal care Townshend always took with his men, and how he treated them as human beings and not as mere machines. The following story is in illustration of this:

I awarded seven days' C.B. to Private Kasamallah Hassan this morning. He had been getting into hot water a lot last year, but has been doing much better lately. His crime was trying to sell a pair of boots to an Egyptian cavalry soldier, and being drunk at the same time. This man had been a prisoner of war, but had enlisted in the 12th regiment, being a keen young black, so instead of trying him by court martial as I should have done, I cancelled the crime of "Making away with Govt. property" and called it "improper conduct," and told him to turn over a new leaf and he would find a friend in me. So I let him off with "seven days" confinement to the lines. His excuse was that he was hard up and wanted money (poor devil!). I sent him privately 5/6. As he only asked 2/- from the trooper for his boots, I expect he will now think he has scored! I hear that most of the crime in these black regiments is over women and drink.

*March 26.* I furnished the advance guard this day with my Battalion. Marched at 6.10 a.m. Following up came 160 camels; then my other half battalion under Hopkinson; then another 160 camels, and then the rear guard, supplied by 11th Battalion. We had to reach Akasheh in one march and it was a most severe one. I halted five minutes every hour. At about 10.30 a.m. we left the Nile and entered a bad defile in the hills which opened up into a broad plain of soft sand with hills in the distance. The heat from the rocks was terrible and tried the men very highly. They were dead beat when we reached the river again at Okmeh, 6 or 7 miles from Akasheh. A two hours' halt and then on again.

*April 6.* A patrol of 30 or 40 Dervish horsemen came down yesterday evening about 5.30 and remained halted about 2,500 yards off. It was no doubt a challenge on the part of the Dervish horsemen to our cavalry to go out. Broadwood started with about 50 men of his squadron, but Macdonald sounded the halt. It is a thousand pities we have not got Indian Cavalry here.

*April 9.* Crossed the river with 300 men in boats, and built a very strong sangar on west bank. Built it in less than 3 hours, which was very quick work, and garrisoned it with 25 rifles of my own regiment. I always take off my coat and work with the men on fatigue at this kind of job. I notice it makes a great difference in the manner the men go to work. They buckle to directly they see a British officer working also.

Like many another commander in those days, Townshend was often hampered by the ignorance or carelessness of the authorities at home. An entry in his diary on April 14th complains bitterly of the state in which the new rifles had been sent out

*April 14.* The new rifles we have taken over are so full of sand that in many cases it is impossible to ease the springs, the blocks are set so high up. Consequently the solid drawn cartridge case cannot be inserted unless the lever is violently jerked downwards. And this when we might be engaged at any moment! I call it criminal folly that no one should have had the common sense to have cloths put round the breech blocks to keep the sand out. It shows a lack of practical knowledge. The first thing I did in getting to Sarras and taking over command of my regiment was to order cloth to be kept wound round the breech blocks to keep the dust out, and this dodge I began as long ago as 1885 in the Camel Corps, and of the greatest benefit I found it. Now I have at once ordered that the whole Battalion be set on cleaning rifles. The armourer, to whom I have lent 30 men to help him, is to clean 100 rifles a day—all companies to parade two hours a day under their company officers cleaning rifles.

On April 24th he got a note from that famous soldier and gentleman rider, Roddy Owen, who had at last got into the E. A.

Dear T. T.

Don't you wish you were me,

The last joined sub in the Camel-rie?

Yours Rod-die.

The latter half of April was spent in route marching, building blockhouses, reconnoitring and generally training and preparing the men for an offensive to be taken later on against the Dervishes. The diary was kept very fully every day, with complete accounts of state of Battalions and every little detail.

*May 1.* Kitchener arrived to-day with Col. Hunter, Major Wingate, Burn-Murdoch and Watson, the A.D.C. They went round the defences, and curiously enough the day brought the first serious brush with the Dervishes. Burn-Murdoch went out with three squadrons after a reported patrol of 60 Dervish horsemen who had come down from Firkhet in the night, and had managed to carry off three or four of our friendly Arabs. A native scout galloped in about midday, saying that they had met a very large number of Dervishes who had charged them and cut up our force. Half a Battalion of 11th Sudanese were sent up the Firkhet road, and shortly after they started, the other half were sent after them, and the 12th were ordered to man the defences. This support had been sent owing to the arrival of a cavalry horseman, who had lost his sword and carbine and putties! He said he had been attacked on the road, and he was in an awful fright. About three p.m. I was ordered to send out two companies, escorting six camel loads of ammunition, and six camels carrying water up the Firkhet road. Cavalry wounded, men and horses, came trickling in. I saw two men who had been speared in the back. One was sitting on his horse and the man leading him was crying! I asked where he was wounded and he said he was not wounded, but he continued to boo-hoo! The cavalry and 11th Sudanese returned at 5 p.m. The fight had been all over at 2 p.m., before they got there.

According to the account given to Townshend by Burn-Murdoch, they had met a force of about 300 Dervish horsemen, and 100 foot, and that, seeing it was too large a force to charge, they had retired and the Dervishes had charged their rear. But they had

successfully turned right about and repulsed them. They appear to have a much inferior set of men to the Dervishes encountered by the English at Abu Klea, and if they had been as good, the British force would have been cut up altogether.

*May 4.* A Reuter arrived with the news that the Egyptian victory had given great satisfaction in England! This was taken to refer to the skirmish of May 1st, when the English could not even guess at how many Dervishes were killed. On the other hand the Dervishes have sent news of the fight calling it a victory for the Khalifa, whose troops had defeated the *whole* Turkish Army outside Firkhet. It appears from secret intelligence brought in by desert spies that the total loss of the Dervishes was about 50 killed and wounded.

*May 8.* Up to the present I have hardly altered Maxwell's system in the regiment, but now I am gradually beginning to introduce little changes. For example, I intend that a private shall be able to see his British Wing Commander if he likes, and talk over his little grievances—as is done in the Indian Army. If this is judiciously done, it detracts nothing from the authority of the Company Commander, and it increases the contentment of the men immensely.

*May 9.* The Governor of Dongola has given permission for Akasheh to be attacked. He is evidently unlike the Furniture Van people who "take all risks."

However, a month after the first brush with the Dervishes, a stern fight was fought at Firkhet, which was planned and executed by the Sirdar himself, and carried out with his usual precision. Briefly, the arrangements of the Sirdar were as follows: One

column under the command of Burn-Murdoch, with Townshend Second-in-Command, was to go round and cut in south of the Dervishes at Firkhet, the remainder under Kitchener himself would attack from the north.

Townshend and his force left Akasheh about 6 p.m. to begin his march into the desert, arriving at the meeting point with the cavalry at about 9.30 p.m. Burn-Murdoch and his men joined him at 10.30 p.m., and the whole force was concentrated at about 2.30 a.m. After a further march of three miles or so they reached the hills overlooking the Nile, and Firkhet village.

I could, from this ridge, see the plain below, with the village of Firkhet quite close, about 80 yards away. We were on a line of small hills overlooking it from the S.E. The Horse Artillery guns made good practice on Firkhet. I have since heard that the Dervishes were taken completely by surprise and the first shell from our gun killed eight men. The Camel Corps had dismounted and were attacking a clump of rocks held by the Dervishes south of Firkhet. They advanced by rushes up to a point just in front of the Dervish rocks, but did not push on any further, remaining stationary and exchanging lively fire with the Dervishes, both sides being well under cover. The cavalry were in the plain further south; the Maxims were west, towards the river; and you could hear the "please press the button" very frequently.

It was about 5.30 a.m. when we heard the main body of the troops under the Sirdar attacking Firkhet from the north, the attack being announced by a tremendous fire, a ceaseless hailstorm of independent firing. I never heard such a tremendous fire, and the Dervishes in Firkhet must have

found it hellish. About 7,000 men were firing into it! The Dervishes very soon began running on all sides, and we could see them being bundled over, lying like dead pigeons in their white clothes.

Suddenly Burn-Murdoch sent his galloper to me to say that numbers of Dervishes were about to break out on our right, where the guns had gone, and ordered me to proceed there and head them back. I took the two companies left with me at the double. . . . When we topped the rise I deployed on the move, moving on in line, and could then see the Dervishes in white groups coming out of a nullah in the rocks in front, but evidently wavering. I poured a hot fire into them, and they fled right and left. The show was over. It was a case of *sauve qui peut* for the Dervishes. I could see them running away into the desert. I now got a message from Burn-Murdoch to bring up my men, as he was moving south for the pursuit. We could see the Sirdar's troops swarming down the slopes in Firkhet.

The Sirdar rode up about 9 a.m. He was very pleased and chatted for some time. Colonel Rundle told me that no resistance was expected at Suarda. . . . Colonel Hunter came up about 3 p.m. and gave me details of the fight which took place on the Sirdar's part of the field. He said that Macdonald's brigade had had the best show. Our casualties amounted to 100 killed and wounded, and the Dervishes to about 1,200. Making a rough calculation, there were about 2,500 Dervishes in Firkhet, and we were at least 9,000 men with good guns and ammunition and Maxims. The arrangements and plan of action were excellent, and it does great credit to the Sirdar. The action was a walk-over as regards fighting. No one had a doubt as to what the result of the fighting would be, the only question was as to how we



could catch them when the retreat began. No quarter was given to the Baggaras. Some were shot hiding in the rocks by the river, but many of the Jehadir riflemen were spared. I heard that some women had been taken at Firkhet, one in pyjamas patched with different colours—a garulous old lady.

We moved off at 5 p.m. for Amara. The Battalion looked very imposing on camels, and must have been a strange sight. I rode at the head on my horse with my orderly, Bindas, carrying my yellow standard with "12" on it. I threw out a section under Sergeant Buckingham as advanced guard. The country is much prettier now; a thick belt of trees all along the river, and plenty of villages much better built, large, good roads, and the broad sandy desert to the east. No more mountains. Here and there we passed a dead Dervish, cut up by our cavalry—but very few bodies.

*June 14 (Sunday).* Dined with the Sirdar. He is in great spirits. Has received congratulatory telegrams from the Queen, Khedive, Lord Salisbury and Lord Wolseley. A Dervish this morning from the west bank reports Dongola deserted and everyone bolting.

Townshend was very anxious that the force should go on ahead, and seize Dongola by a *coup de main* with a flying column which would find enough sheep and other provisions in the town to enable them to hang on till the main body could arrive. But Colonel Hunter, to whom he expressed his views, said he thought the Sirdar would mark time till the steamers and boats and all supplies could be got up the river and a railway completed to Kosheh. Hunter agreed that this would give the Khalifa time to reinforce Dongola, but hazarded an

opinion that perhaps that was what the Sirdar wanted, in order that the Khalifa should be made to fight a long way from his base.

There seem to have been several cases of insubordination in his Battalion at about this time, and Townshend, as was the rule with him, took a stern view, assembling courts martial for their trial. On June 21st he called a meeting of the officers of his Battalion, and told them that these cases of insubordination of the men towards the N.C.O.'s must be stopped, adding that he was pleased with their conduct, but wished them to understand that they were to work in the SPIRIT of his orders, in that he was determined to maintain good discipline in the ranks.

I may insert here a letter from Townshend's great friend, "Roddy Owen," of the Lancashire Fusiliers. It must have been one of the last he ever wrote, for he died of cholera at Ambigol Wells eleven days later.

Ambigol Wells,

31-6-96

*Private.*

Dear Tommy.—Thanks for your letter.

You say, why don't I come up? But remember, since I do not dispose, I take d—d good care not to propose. It's not quite so bad as it sounds, as I perambulate between Akosheh and Sarras, so can always have a chance when I like—Legge and Young are at Ambigol River, if I want company, and there are gluttonous advantages connected with being on the line, to which I do not shut my eyes.

*Entre nous*, my relegation to the rear (comparatively) is evidently intentional, for in order to prevent me having the west bank Arabs as an excuse for the front, they've taken them away

from me merely informing me I am to confine myself to the east.

You are quite right, I ought to have been exceedingly nice to S—— and I've no doubt things might have been different, but I was so upset over the Shashen incident that I am unable to be nice to any of them.

Before the fighting, and afterwards, I asked to be sent with the west bank Arabs, as I always anticipated should be done, but only to be refused. It was a great mistake and only shows how little matters may shape great results. For many got away there, and they arrived practically unarmed, and would have been an easy prey to a little common sense.

I take it this cholera will stop an English Expedition.

What sort of fun did you have with the Camelry? I need not tell you one of our friends whom I asked (who was there), said you never got engaged. *Mais cela va* ——?

They've fairly taken it now in *The Times*. When Murdoch's cavalry continually charge the enemy in position and will not be restrained—like Rachel.

Tell me the news forward. The Railway at Kosheh, I suppose, and Gun boats set? Marking the era of another move?

Yours ever,  
RODDY OWEN.

And when Townshend heard the news of his friend's death:

*July 12.* I was most awfully grieved this morning to hear that poor Roddy Owen died of cholera at Ambigol Wells yesterday. I am very cut up, as I liked him so much. Only the other day he wrote to me complaining of how he had been

treated in this show up here, and how they would not let him take charge of the friendly Arabs on the west bank.

Townshend had Knight, the correspondent of *The Times*, staying with him. This was the same Knight who had taken part in the Hunza Nagar expedition, and he afterwards published a most entertaining account of it, under the title of "Where Three Empires Meet." Townshend (who often wrote his diary in French) describes Knight as "*voyageur intrépide et renommé, homme, grand, maigre, d'un air de farceur.*" He also describes one of the other correspondents in the following strains :

*. . . . un petit, rougeaud, chauve avec une impériale, un viveur tenace trousseur forcené de filles, coureur de bouges, mais en même temps, bon garçon, fort intelligent. Il rage d'être enfermé depuis quatre mois dans la chasteté obligatoire de ce Sudan maudite.*

Indications are not absent that he did not always get on well with Macdonald, who seems to have indulged in "pinpricks" at various times for slight reasons. Under date of July 22nd, Townshend writes in his diary:—

Macdonald wrote officially to me yesterday to stop my Battalion holding "zikers" at night. These "zikers" are religious ceremonial laments for the wives dead at Halfa. About 30 women of this Battalion have up to date died at Halfa. I wrote back to Macdonald to the effect that I understood that the custom in Sudanese regiments was to allow the men to hold a "ziker" up to ten at night, and naturally I did not care to interfere with the religious customs of natives. However, in accordance with his wishes I had ordered that there should be no "zikers" or any

noise whatever after "Lights Out" at 9 p.m. I think Macdonald is very mistaken to interfere in any way in matters of this kind. Natives talk of these things and resent interference. . . .

In two cases, where I sent up two men for summary court martial (both of them richly deserving it) Macdonald had refused, and ordered me to punish them regimentally.

Throughout the month of August nothing was done about the advance. Kitchener was getting impatient, but the rise of the Nile was slower than usual that year. On the 22nd, however, the movement forward began.

*Aug. 22* Macdonald informed us that we would march to Wady Halfa on the river about 18 miles, according to the map. He said he would put all the rations on the camels and the entrenching tools on the boats. Each battalion had 35 camels for transport and they would have to carry kits of officers and companies, greatcoats, blankets, cooking pots and rations. Macdonald told us we must carry all our rations, that is to say, to the end of the month, on these camels. It was perfectly impossible and Jackson and Collinson were just as much surprised as I was. Macdonald said he had been ordered to put rations on the boats but he had been determined to put entrenching tools on the boats instead. . . .

*Aug. 23.* Men employed on fatigue all the morning. A good preparation for a desert march of 18 miles in front of them and absolutely no water being carried for them! All the water the men had was in their water bottles. The hospital consisted of ten camels, mostly taken up by hospital baggage! So that if men fell out in any numbers they would have to be left in the desert.

Our strength was over 3,000 men. I moved off into the desert at 6 p.m. precisely. The ten camels for the hospital did not mean ten "carrying power." Actually only three camels were available which could carry ten men, and this for a brigade of 3,000 men with no reserve water! As it turned out, lots of men would have died, had it not been for the Camel Corps coming across from the river picking up many of our men. And so the whole lot were got in. . . .

*Aug. 24.* We reached Wady Halfa about 3.15 a.m., but found there were still about two more miles to go to reach the river. The men now began falling out in threes and fours at a time. Hopkinson, who was in the rear of my Battalion, sent me a message when we were in sight of the river that the men were dying of thirst and lying down. I replied that we were close to the river, and he must get them on.

We bivouacked for the day on the river bank, but received orders to march at 1.30 p.m. The heat was the worst I had ever known. Not a breath of wind, and we were lying under the bushes pouring with perspiration. To march at midday was simple madness, on the top of an exhausting march of 18 miles in the desert. But Macdonald told me he had orders to push on, and be at Absarat that night. We had eight or nine miles to do. I told the men what the orders were, that they must do their best, and that if any man had to fall out he must get down to the river bank. We were to march into the desert without water but I told the men they should water before we left the river. . . .

The men struggled on, though several fell out and one or two died from the heat. Townshend encouraged them all the way, having five minutes'

halt every half hour, and inducing them to sing on the march. They reached Absarat at midnight and were then overtaken by a violent sandstorm.

*Aug. 25.* About 400 transport camels under Major Kitchener arrived from Kosheh. The men had to drop their loads in the desert a few miles out, mount the camels and make for the river at Absarat as hard as they could! Macdonald ordered me to send 180 men on fatigue to store sacks at the Commissariat. I felt very indignant and wrote the S. O. saying I could not help, that it was very rough on the men and that I had hoped for at least one day's rest. But 30 of them had to make huts for Macdonald and his staff. I would not have had any hut made for myself till the men's were made. . . .

A letter has come in from Payne of the 1st Brigade, saying that 463 men are missing in the desert! I was told to send out what camels I had with water, as they were arriving in ones and twos, strung out for miles. I sent out at once all the camels, mules, horses and ponies we had in the regiment. . . . Payne told me the scenes in the desert were awful, men falling down and lying there, and others trying to struggle on with their mouths open, reeling like drunken men. Seven died in the desert. Seven more died in the hospital here. I never saw anything like the scenes in the hospital. Some were lying naked having water poured over them, their bodies twitching about, their eyeballs staring out and foaming at the mouth. . . . What I personally cannot understand is, "Why march in the day?" I should have halted all day rigging up blankets on bayonets stuck in the sand, anything better than marching, and would then have moved on in the cool night, as we did in the Nile Expedition

of 1885. The whole thing is most unfortunate and must have a bad effect on the men who put it all down to the British officers. . . .

*Sept. 5.* Brigade route march. What Macdonald's object is in this I fail to see. The men are excellent marchers. If he thinks that the middle of a campaign and the hot weather in the Sudan is the proper time and season to teach troops to march, then all I can say is, "Gord 'elp 'im!"

*Sept. 19.* We reached Abu Fatmeh about 6.30. The country is a huge plain of hard sand.

On the next day, September 22nd, the whole British force, numbering about 12,000 men, marched to Sheik Hussana, only six miles from Dongola. It was thought that the Dervish forces would give battle outside the town and the word went round that the Sirdar intended to attack on the 23rd, leaving the camp in fighting formation at daylight. The scene was most imposing, the plain appeared to be literally crowded with British troops. But Townshend was not far wrong when he expressed the opinion that the Dervishes would not wait, as soon as they saw what a large force was against them. Large numbers of them could be seen in front on the sand-hills, but it soon appeared that they were retreating and our mounted troops moved off in pursuit.

It then became evident that no enemy was left in Dongola, so the British marched past the town, encamping along the bank to the south side of the ruins. Townshend writes in his diary:—

I recognised the house, which used to be occupied by Lord Wolseley, in the distance. We were all disappointed that not a shot had been fired by the Infantry; but I was glad, at any rate, to have seen the occupation of Dongola, as I was one of the last who evacuated it in 1885.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BATTLE OF THE ATBARA

FOR the remainder of the year 1896 and for the whole of 1897, Townshend was engaged in training his regiment, the 12th Sudanese. Conflicting rumours were rife in the autumn of 1896 as to Kitchener's actual plans in regard to the advance on Khartoum, but the whole of the military personnel in the Sudan were somewhat startled by the news that the Sirdar had suddenly gone north to Cairo, with all his staff and special service officers, taking all the steamers and leaving no hint whatever as to future plans.

Meanwhile, Townshend, having a good deal of spare time on his hands, laid down a course of study for himself. His days he mapped out as follows:—On Monday, Wednesday and Friday: two hours before midday for Private Correspondence, and three hours to French exercises and French reading; and on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday he followed the same course, substituting Arabic for French. Sundays he devoted to private correspondence and the reading of Military History. In addition to the above he gave a certain time every day to reading and studying the official drill books.

On November 18th, Townshend heard he had been made a Brevet Lieut.-Colonel and received "hearty congratulations" from his old friend Slatin Pasha, and from all his lady friends at home.

A month later the rumour was that the Egyptian Army were to make for Berber next hot weather, with Khartoum to follow as soon as may be. The men naturally had a good deal to say

against the hot weather campaign, and Townshend was especially disappointed that he could not get even a short leave in Europe for change of scene and climate.

On December 27th, the Sirdar came to inspect the various garrisons. It was a matter for considerable surprise that he did not speak to any of the native officers or N.C.O.'s. Townshend's comment on this is that in India a General at inspection would have spoken to each, and made much of them. The inspection was of the briefest, and he left the next day for Korti.

*Jan. 15.* General Hunter arrived this evening with Captain Morgen of the German Army, who had been sent up by the Emperor. He is taking copious notes of everything and asks questions such as: "On which arms do the N.C.O.'s wear their stripes?" He is in some Grenadier Regiment, not in the Guards. Dined with General Hunter, and sat next to the German. It was a cheery evening and my song with the banjo, "*Qui veut entendre, qui veut savoir comment les Anglais aiment*" was much appreciated. The German unbent considerably. He was astonished at my being a Colonel. "But you are so young" he said. He is covered with German orders, and suggested the name of "The Haberdasher" to me, so enormous was each medal ribbon. Hunter tells me that in Germany decorations or medals are given for an inspection or a review, and that many German officers are covered with medal ribbons who have never seen a shot fired.

Townshend obtained a short leave to go to Cairo and left Debbeh on February 15th. At Luxor he came across a Mr. Douglas Murray and his daughter. Murray introduced him to the Comtesse Cahen D'Anvers, and her daughter Alice. He adds

in his diary:—"Both of them charming, and we all sit together for meals on the boat." Cairo was reached on February 26th. He had to spend his leave in Cairo, as officers were not allowed to go so far away as London though they might, strangely enough, go to Naples or Rome. While in Cairo he received a batch of letters forwarded from England, among which was one from Younghusband, the explorer and political officer whom he had known on the North-West Frontier. The letter is interesting as showing what firm friendships Townshend formed, with all manner of different people. Younghusband writes from Bulawayo:—

Bulawayo Club,  
December 22nd, 1896.

My dear Townshend,

Many congratulations indeed, old chap, on your second Brevet, which I have just seen in the papers that arrived to-day. You are going ahead like smoke now, and well you deserve to. I have not written to you for ages, but don't think I have forgotten you or lost interest in you. I heard about you from young St. Aubyn\* in the 60th, who showed me a letter you had written from Firkhet. I was glad to be able to have a chat about you, for I reckon you among my real pals, and in my wandering life, when I don't get much chance of seeing anyone for more than a few weeks at a stretch, I like to keep up the old friendships I have made.

Yours ever,  
F. C. YOUNGHUSBAND.

There is a break of four weeks in the diary, from the end of February, 1897, and it is not taken up again until March 29th. In the meantime Towns-

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\* and son of 1st Lord St. Levan—known as "Bean" to all his friends. Drowned in the *Persia*.

hend had made great friends with the Comtesse Cahen D'Anvers, riding with her and her daughter into the desert. The Sirdar had again wired from Halfa that he did not wish officers to remain more than a month in Cairo, so he started back on March 28th for the Sudan Frontier.

On the 6th of the month a disastrous fire had occurred in Paris. A flimsy building in which a fancy fair was being held was burnt down in twelve minutes. The old Duchess d'Alençon perished, and 146 corpses were identified. The Comtesse Cahen D'Anvers and her daughter Alice were there, but were saved by being near the door. Townshend sent a telegram to the Comtesse in Paris and received an answer that they were safe, but had been at the bazaar. The intimacy between him and the mother and daughter seemed to increase every day, though as yet only expressed in correspondence.

*June 22.* The letter of the Comtesse D'Anvers is the sweetest I have ever had in my life. She writes as a mother to me. Never have I been touched like this. She and her daughter Alice are the best friends I have, and I look forward only to the time when I can get home and see them again.

Meanwhile the Sirdar was patiently awaiting the time when the railway should be finished and sufficient force collected to advance on Khartoum with the certainty of victory. Townshend returned to resume command of his Battalion.

*Sept. 7.* News has reached the camp that Berber has been taken without resistance. The men were all disgusted at having been "done out of a fight," and I do not suppose we shall be allowed south of Berber without a British force to help us.

*Sept. 10.* This evening I gave an entertainment for the Battalion. This is a big sort of show called

by the Sudanese a "Darluka." Much "boosa" or Sudanese beer is given out, and everyone turned up at the 12th Sudanese quarters at 6.30. Colonel Lewis and I paid them a visit after mess. All the tribes danced to the music of tom-toms and the accompaniment of singing in perfect time. The black women, naked to the waist, danced frantically face to face with the Sudanese troopers, shaking their breasts and swaying their big hips and diffusing all round them a strong odour of *fille du Sudan*. The men twirled round them with gestures at once amusing but obscene. At the end they all got very drunk and abandoned themselves to fiercer orgies. *Une nuit blanche hors ligne!* But it is no affair of mine. I was discreet and left the scene early. Poor devils, why should they not amuse themselves in their own fashion? and, after all, as Sir Richard Burton said, morality is largely a question of geography.

Meanwhile the rumours of the advance on Khartoum varied from day to day. The Sirdar kept his plans very secret, and no one knew what was going to happen till Sir Michael Hicks Beach announced early in December that the advance to Khartoum was to be continued, and the British Army was going to assist the Egyptian troops to re-occupy that place. This pointed to the autumn of 1898, as there would not be enough water in the Shabluka cataract between Metemneh and Khartoum to get the boats over before the autumn.

*Dec. 20.* Received orders at 12.30 p.m. for the 12th Sudanese to proceed immediately to Berber. The *Abu Klea* arrived at 8 p.m. and we commenced embarking the men at 10 p.m. and started at midnight with the right half the Battalion,

taking five days' rations. The rumour is that the Dervishes have crossed to the right bank of the Nile at Shendy, and are preparing to attack Berber.

The journey was not, of course, up the Nile to Berber, but down the river past Dongola and Handak to Wady Halfa, where the troops would take the newly constructed railway which reached a point about 12 miles beyond Abu Hamed on the way to Berber. At Halfa, Townshend dined with the Sirdar, who told him that the cause of the movement of troops was the rumour that the Dervishes were about to attack Berber, and the idea was to concentrate at that place and from there take Metemneh. He was clever enough to utilise the scare caused by this rumour to get a further grant of £50,000 for extending the railway from Berber to the Atbara. The men were allowed one day clear at Halfa to visit their women, who had been concentrated there for some time past, and the women had each provided a sheep for her man to eat! In spite of this, every man was present when the Battalion paraded, and they marched to the station with the band playing in front in the middle of a mob of women!

*Dec. 25.* Christmas Day at Abu Hamed awaiting the arrival of the brigade. Am staying in a large house that used to belong to the Dervish Emirs and have a room in the old harem quarters, calculated to give me troublous dreams of a voluptuous and dusky-skinned Fatima in twinkling anklets and an oriental figure. I thought over all the changes that had come over Abu Hamed since it was taken by General Hunter on August 7th. Where are the moon-faced ones who lived and quarrelled and kissed their lord and master in these rooms from which one now hears

the whistle of the engines? For the railway is cut straight through the middle of the village.

*Dec. 26.* It was very cold when I woke up, and a damnable draught, and I did not dream of Fatima after all!

*Dec. 27.* Major Lawrie's battery and our regimental transport mules and private horses arrived after only six days on the march from Merawi. Very rapid marching, they did two marches of 26 miles each. They were accompanied by about 40 of the women of the 12th Sudanese, much to old Long's anger, and the more he described their heinous crimes in stealing milk and fowls from the villagers on the road, the more I laughed!

The troops under Townshend marched into Berber on January 7th.

Thirteen years had passed since Gordon had been murdered at Khartoum, and the Sudan had passed entirely under the sway of the bloodthirsty Mahdi. He had consolidated his power, the country was devastated, and the population reduced to slavery. On his death in 1885, six months after Gordon was killed, his successor, Abdulla el Taashi, known generally as the "Khalifa," assumed the sovereignty without a protest on the part of any European Power.

Meanwhile Kitchener's plans had been progressing slowly but surely. The necessary railway had been laid across the desert to Berber, and at last the campaign was opened.

*April 7, 1898.* This day it was known in the morning that we were to march the same evening to attack the Dervishes in their entrenched position at Nakheila. At 8 p.m. we halted to let

the men have a sleep, and to water at the river. But the river was fully fifteen hundred yards off, and if one Battalion at a time went to the river, it would have taken all night, so I served out water in my fantassies, for use and to fill up water-bottles so as to start at 1 a.m. with full water-bottles for the fight. This left us with no water, but as I said to the Brigadier: "It is enough if we win, as we shall get on to the river at once. And if we don't win, there will be no question of water!" We marched on at one o'clock in the morning, moon up, hard sand, good going and a cool breeze. We were making now a good sweep to the eastward, so as to come down opposite Mahmoud's camp.

The next day, Good Friday, the Battle of the Atbara was decided, not a great battle in itself as compared with others, but most important as clearing the way to Khartoum itself. Townshend describes it fully in his diary:—

At noon we were opposite the Dervish position and we forced it in battle order. The British Brigade on the left, the first brigade; and the second (ours) on the right. We could see the Dervish position, the trenches and the *zareeba* and thick woods behind, stretching to the river. I could hear the beating of the "noggaras" calling the Dervishes to arms.

The action opened with a bombardment by the battery of horse artillery and the mountain gun detachment with Maxims and Nordenfeldts. A movement of the Dervish cavalry was checked by the Maxims, and at 7.25 a.m. the bombardment ceased, and the order for the general advance was given. Up to then the Dervishes had hardly showed a man. There were 8,000 riflemen in Mahmoud's



army, and they had taken cover behind the breast-works.

We advanced with bayonets fixed, drums beating and colours flying: it was a grand sight! Then the Dervish riflemen opened a biting fire from the trenches. The ground was perfectly open and descended in a gentle slope towards the Dervish position, putting us up against the skyline, as it were. I soon opened fire in return, using independent fire instead of volleys, as I do not believe in volleys at short ranges. After a short fire, I advanced again, myself leading the centre, Lieut. Harley leading the right wing, and Captain Hon. C. E. Walsh the left wing. Captain Ford-Hutchinson, my Second-in-Command, was in charge of the two companies in reserve, in rear of the centre. My orders to him were to keep the two companies in hand at all costs, for I knew that when we rushed the *zareeba* the confusion would be very bad.

Alternately firing and rushing forward, I rapidly approached the Dervish position. The men were dropping fairly fast. Walsh had been shot and the fire got very hot. I led each rush myself, sounding the "cease fire" on my whistle, which the men obeyed very well. Then I dashed through the ranks, leading the Battalion about thirty yards ahead, the men following excellently. General Hunter was riding along in the front rank of the Battalion, for he accompanied the 12th Sudanese in the assault, cheering them on. . . . A lot of men were firing as I called on the 12th to charge, waving them on. They broke into a rush with cheers and we swept into the position through the *zareeba*. How it was I wasn't hit I don't know, for the Dervishes must have been firing at me. I

was well ahead and the bullets were cutting the ground all about me. They did not run till we were about thirty yards from them. Harley was shot just behind me, just as I started the charge. I did not see him fall, and only heard of it when we had reached the river bank—victors!

The disorder was great when we had got through the *zareeba*, a bickering fire was being kept up on us from the interior trenches. All companies were mixed up except the two reserve companies. Sergeant Hilton, my drill instructor, was hit in the arm but went on all the same. It was a splendid charge. We were in first by a long way. The day before I had determined in my own mind to be first in and to show everyone that the 12th were second to none. I had the chance (as I had had at Chitral) and I took advantage of it. When we entered the *zareeba*, my Sergeant-Major heard General Hunter order Kincaird to ride to the Sirdar, and tell him the 12th were in the enemy's position. I now collected a crowd and rushed the second line of trenches, after keeping up a short hot fire on them. Two or three mines exploded on us: one of our men had the top of his head blown off: this makes me think that they must have been a sort of *fougasse* loaded with stones. We kept on surging through the crowd, carrying two or three lines of trenches by rushes and arrived on the river bank. The men were drunk with excitement and fight. How we cheered General Hunter, the men crowding round him, well they might! I had lost my voice. The men crowded round shaking and kissing my hand and said that I should be a Pasha, and now lead them to Omdurman! I was helpless, and could do nothing but whisper. I got on my horse, the men all round me offering me flags and loot. Desultory firing was still going on, some of our men

lining the river bank firing at the fugitives crossing the river and at the Dervishes hiding under the precipitous bank.

The scene in the trenches was awful: dead and dying Dervishes, all black riflemen, like our own men. No quarter was given, and they did not ask it. They fought heroically, but they could not stand against our splendid Sudanese. In the trenches, I saw a dead girl lying beside a dead Dervish. The losses of the Dervishes were computed at 3,000 killed and many crawled away to die in the bush. In the trenches they lay as thick as blackberries. General Hunter warmly congratulated me on the 12th Sudanese, and on the way in which I had led them. After forming up the Battalion I took them back through the position to the ground whence we had started. Out of the 13,000 men of Mahmoud's army, only the 8,000 Jehadia had stood: as usual, the scoundrelly Bagaras had bolted and got off scot free. On reaching the high ground, the Sirdar with his staff rode up and said: "Townshend, I congratulate you." He addressed the Battalion, telling them that he was proud of them. He called for the Sergeant-Major and promoted him to be Second-Lieutenant on the spot. I have never had a prouder day, nor felt more elated in my life. It had been a proud day for me when the Queen pinned on my C.B. at Osborne. To-day was prouder, for I had been congratulated by the Commander-in-Chief on the field of battle.

The losses of the Anglo-Egyptian army at Atbara were 572 killed and wounded, of which the British contingents lost 110. In the 12th Sudanese, Walsh and Harley were severely wounded, and Sergeant Hilton shot through the throat. Mahmoud, the leader of the Dervishes, was captured, but Osman

Digna escaped as usual. Mahmoud is described as a well-built, good-looking young Arab of about 27 or 28 years of age, dressed in a handsome jibbah which was well splashed with blood.

Townshend found his brother officers Walsh and Harley lying under a tree: their wounds had been dressed. At 3.40 p.m. on the same day of the battle, the force returned to Umdabeah Camp. The 12th Sudanese led the column.

It was a strange sight at sunset, the flags and spears which the men were carrying, the singing of the men, and now and then men dashing out of the ranks, wildly brandishing their rifles in the air. Many Dervish woman accompanied us, having become the willing prey of our blacks, though their own husbands were hardly cold in the trenches. We all felt disgust as we gazed on a picture that would have made the fortune of any artist who could have painted it just as it was.

Townshend seems to have never omitted his diary no matter in what situation he found himself, and he wrote down his account of the battle of the Atbara, from which the above is taken, in the camp at Umdabeah the same night.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BATTLE OF OMDURMAN AND THE FALL OF KHARTOUM

AFTER the battle on Good Friday, the Sirdar pushed steadily on with the work of preparation for the final act of the Sudan drama. The railway crept on, reaching its terminus at Fort Atbara in June. As the Khalifa had not made any effort to replace the losses of Mahmoud's men, but seemed determined to concentrate and await the British at Khartoum, the river from Atbara to Shabluka (the last cataract) was open for the additional British gunboats. The railway was now free from loads of railway material, and could bring up supplies and stores to depôts along the route. Shellal (a few miles above Assouan), Wady Halfa and Fort Atbara, were the chief bases for the forwarding of supplies. From Shellal to Halfa goods were shipped on barges lashed to river steamers: from Halfa to Atbara they were carried by the new desert railway. In July a new base was formed at Nasri Island (about eight miles from the Shabluka cataract), and the supplies concentrated there in large quantities.

At the end of the month, the Nile being very full and still rising, the advance began. There was ample water in the Shabluka rapids, and the concentration of stores was nearly complete. British regiments were waiting at Cairo, for until the forces under Mahmoud and Osman Digna had been dispersed, it was not safe to make any general advance. But now that Shendy and Metemneh were

evacuated by the enemy, the track across the Bayuda desert could be left unguarded, and the route from Suakin to Berber was safe. With a camp at the last cataract at Shabluka, both these desert routes were utilised for the advance of reinforcements. Troops from Suakin crossed the desert from Berber: others from Merawi and Dongola came by the river in boats: the Camel Corps and cavalry used the old track across the Bayuda desert to Metemneh. The black battalions who had remained at Berber since the fight at the Atbara, were shipped in steel barges, lashed to either side of the steamers. The whole force, British, Egyptian, and Sudanese was concentrated at the last cataract by the last week in August.

Our force numbered about 23,000 men, under the command of the Sirdar himself, with Majors-General Rundle and Wingate on his staff. It was made up as follows: 1st Royal Warwickshire Regiment, 1st Lincolnshire Regiment, 1st Seaforth Highlanders, 1st Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, 1st Grenadier Guards, 1st Northumberland Fusiliers, 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, 2nd Rifle Brigade, six Maxims with detachment of Garrison Artillery, four Maxims with detachment of 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers. These formed the British Division under Major-General Gatacre. The Egyptian Division under Major-General Hunter was made up of ten Egyptian Battalions, and six Sudanese Regiments.

The Cavalry included the 21st Lancers under Colonel Martin and squadrons of Egyptian Cavalry under Lieut.-Colonel Broadwood. In addition there were two batteries of Royal Field Artillery, a horse battery and four field batteries with Maxims of Egyptian artillery, eight companies of the Egyptian Camel Corps, and the usual detachments of Royal Engineers, medical and transport corps. On the river were six gunboats and ten steamers.

*July 10.* Jackson's band do nothing but bray away from morning to night, and it is a damnable nuisance for me, as the barracks where they practice are next to mine, and I am continually having to listen to "Sally In Our Alley," "The Bay Of Biscay Oh," and other prehistoric tunes, generally finishing up with "Abide With Me," right through down to the "Amen." It was most humorous to hear a black Sudanese band playing English hymn tunes such as poor old Phayre, the parson at Raynham, used to bombard us with years ago. . . . This evening dined with Shackleton at the mess of the 14th Sudanese. I managed to keep the conversation on things at home. Theatres, hansom cabs, scarlet women, etc., for the eternal Sudan gossip is too awful. Maxwell was dining also and discoursed on the humbug of doctors when attending ladies! He said when his wife had a baby, it cost him a devil of a lot!

*July 13.* My officers will include Captain Ford-Hutchinson (Connaught Rangers), Captain O'Connell, Lieut. Blair (K.O.S.B.), and Lieut. Graham. One hears that Osman Digna is never separated from the Khalifa. He covered himself with shame at the Atbara, and was about the first to bolt. Once he was noted as being a man with a natural genius for desperate measures, but now he is a by-word. For advice on rapid flight, "ask Osman Digna"! I should not wonder if he and the Khalifa are arranging, in the words of the London unwashed—"to shoot the moon. . . ."

*July 21.* Six divorce cases in the Battalion this morning. This means that the orders for our advance to Khartoum have gone through the Battalion, and the men have new wives in prospect!

On July 24th, he notes with satisfaction that Guy St. Aubyn has been appointed A.D.C. to Sir Francis Grenfell, and adds: "He is going to be my best man when I am married in Paris to Alice after Khartoum. God bless the little girl!" He never seems to have had any doubt of his surviving the final fight. His luck had always held and would hold to the last.

There is no doubt he had an exalted opinion of his own merits, and was very free in criticising others, from the Sirdar downwards. Yet, it must be confessed, that his criticisms, if smacking somewhat of self-praise and general self-consciousness, were generally and in the main correct.

*July 27.* Battalion on duty. No parade except for recruits whose tails I am twisting properly. They are going to have a dose of musketry parades. They are only a quarter trained, and yet the Sirdar's strict orders are that they are to be placed in the ranks. What use he must think they are, I can't imagine. But his sentiments are *tout à fait* brick and mortar as regards trained troops. He seems to think that 800 scallywags armed with rifles, and clothed in uniform, make soldiers. There he shows that, though he is a splendid organiser, yet professional knowledge of regiments and details and the worth of fighting men are unknown to him. I have the greatest admiration of the Sirdar as an organiser, the first of his day, at any rate as regards Egypt. He has repainted the map from Halfa to Khartoum, and has thrown open wide the gate to the mysteries of Central Africa and the Lakes. He has made mistakes and I expect not a few: but, as Marshal Turenne said: "Speak to me of a general who has made no mistakes in war, and you speak of one who has seldom made war!" Also when



Sulla, after his victories, styled himself "a happy, rather than a great general, he discovered his profound knowledge of the military art" (Napier). With all this, I do not think he is the man to lead an army in the field; he is not a leader of men, like Sir Redvers Buller, for instance.

On August 3rd, the force started up the river to Metemneh, and Townshend notes in his diary every place at which he had fought in the campaign of 1885. He would order the band of his regiment to play on the upper deck in the evenings, to the great delight of the men and the crew, and the manifest surprise of the natives in the villages along the banks, who shouted out to the men: "Kill and spare not." In camp at Wady Habeshi, just above the Shabluka cataract, a spy was captured, from whom they received intelligence that the Khalifa's army in Khartoum amounted altogether to about 32,000 men. But Townshend notes: "I will bet that the numbers are nearer 12,000"

He moved camp on August 11th to Wady Hamed, about seven miles south of Wady Habeshi.

By August 20th, almost the whole army were concentrated here, awaiting the order to advance.

*Aug. 22.* Dined with Hickman, who commands the 15th Battalion. Stuart-Wortley was there. He is to command the Jaalin "Catch-em-alive-ohs" (on the other bank, thank goodness). Smiler Kennedy of the Camerons was there and Smith-Dorrien.

*Aug. 24.* Everyone in the know at home seems to have come on the stage to take part in the final scene of the taking of Khartoum. Lord Roberts' son is on his way up to be extra orderly officer to the Sirdar. Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein is "Staff Officer of gunboats": Frank

Rhodes, Repington, Prince Francis of Teck and the son of Sir Evelyn Wood!

*Aug. 30.* The famous Winston Churchill, attached to the 21st Lancers, effected to-day the capture of a Dervish, and, exercising great control, did not shoot him. This Dervish turned out to be one of Wingate's most trusty villains! Wingate was awfully annoyed.

*Sept. 1.* It rained heavily last night. It was a night of misery. Wet and stiff, one fell in at 5.30 a.m. Everything wet: saddles and all. Marched at 5.45 a.m. Cavalry scouting in front. Topped Kerreri Hill about 10.15 a.m. and had first view of Omdurman. It was very interesting to see it in the distance, and the gunboats apparently close to Omdurman, going along Halfiyeh Island in single file and firing at the forts. We marched on about 3½ miles from Kerreri, and encamped in a small village on the river bank. About 1 p.m. the Sirdar's staff passed me, and Wingate beckoned to me and told me that the whole of the Dervish army was coming on—30,000 of them! The men were got to arms, and the Sirdar changed the place of our brigade (Maxwell's) on the west front. There was no *zareeba* to cut, so we entrenched ourselves. A good deep trench I made, and I am very glad I did, or our losses would have been very heavy from the enemy's fire as it afterwards proved. I got the reserve ammunition boxes off the mules, and had them served out to the companies, and all buckets and water-skins filled with water. At about 3 p.m. it was known that the Dervish army, which had come out of Omdurman had halted in a big plain, hidden from us by a ridge. All reports agreed that it was an enormous army, at least 30,000 men. Everyone was on the *qui vive* for a night attack.

*Sept. 2.* We stood to our arms at dawn, about 4 a.m. The bombardment of Omdurman by the gunboats began at 5.45. We could hear the booming of the guns. The cavalry had come out at dawn and had begun to fall back, for the whole of the Dervishes were coming on. After about an hour, the Dervish army came into sight, and a most imposing sight it was. There were masses of men in white, and masses of white turbaned heads, dense columns marching due north as if to cut off our line of retreat, a vast number of red, green and white standards, cavalry and Emirs on horseback. One saw that there were *at least* 30,000 Dervishes opposed to us, and one realised that it would be a good fight, as we were about 22,000, I believe, of whom about 7,000 were picked British soldiers. They were all singing as they moved slowly across our front about 2,500 yards off, and one could see the Emirs riding up and down the columns.

Our guns then got to work, and a lively shell fire was kept up on these columns; one saw shells bursting in the midst of these columns, and over the masses of white turbaned heads. But they never broke; they kept steadily on. I thought that when they had got sufficiently far enough to overlap us towards the north, that they would "right form into line," and come straight down on to us to sweep us into the river, for we were drawn up in position with our backs to the Nile. The two British brigades faced south, on the river bank, and a part of them partly west, not many, and the British were not charged at all. Our brigade (Maxwell's Sudanese brigade) faced *west* towards the desert, and on us the whole brunt of the first Dervish attack fell. Macdonald's Sudanese brigade, and Lewis' Egyptian brigade faced *north*, and Collinson's Egyptian brigade were in

support behind Maxwell's brigade in the centre. It turned out as I thought, the Dervish host stopped and faced towards us, and slowly advanced, our guns keeping up a biting shell fire the whole time.

At the same time clouds of men appeared over the high ridge and hill to the south-west, and opened a heavy musketry fusillade on us. The bullets began to sing overhead as these new forces of the enemy got nearer. I saw one or two men of ours hit and carried away in stretchers, one poor fellow dead. I got the men to lie close down in the trench with which I had strengthened our front, and I felt glad that we had done so.

The British brigade had got some *zareeba* thorn from the village near us, and had placed it in front of them, and owing to this they lost more than we did from the enemy's rifle fire, which now got annoying. Several men were hit in the 8th Egyptian Battalion, lying down behind my regiment, and an officer was killed. One heard the beautiful volleys of the British with their long-ranging Lee-Metford rifles, and the Maxims making a noise like fire engines, and their 15-pounder field batteries, all busy on this force of the enemy who had appeared from the south and west. They came on with the greatest pertinacity, and shells literally smoked among them, but they seemed to forge slowly on. Then I turned my glasses to the mass of enemy coming straight down on my front. On they came, running now and firing from the hip as they came. I was walking up and down behind the regiment, the men all lay in their trench, the rifles all ready to fire, only waiting for my order, but I determined that not a trigger should be pulled until they were 400 yards from us. Many of the men kept looking round to me as much as to say "let us fire now."

The masses of the enemy began rushing and cheering, the Emirs leading them with flags just as one sees with the Pathans on the North-West Frontier of India. I now began to think that it would not do to wait until this mass got much closer, so I sang out the order for sights to be put at 600 yards, and then opened with a heavy independent fire, and in a short while our line was all smoke and a ceaseless rattle of Martini rifles. The enemy came on till they reached about 400 yards, and then they seemed to enter a rain of bullets. Struck by a leaden tempest, they *bundled* over in heaps, and soon they stood huddled in groups under the retaining power of the Martini Henry. I saw a brave man leading them on with a large flag (I have his flag), I have never seen a braver. Alone he came on and on, until about 150 yards from us, and then he and his flag fell like a piece of crumpled white paper on the ground, and lay motionless.

The Dervishes were now retiring, not *running*, but skulking away. Some of them walked off as if they were the victors. Our men were cheering now, and I got them up in the trench and we kept up our close and searching fire. No troops in the world could have lived under that fire; no Europeans would have faced it. The valour of those poor half-starved Dervishes in their patched jibbas would have graced Thermopylæ, as Napier would have put it.

I thought the battle was over, so did everyone; but we were mistaken.

A large force now appeared to the north, streaming over Kerreri Hill and cutting off our line of retreat, in swarms like ants. Note, this force of about 12,000 Dervishes who appeared from *north* was the force which hunted the Egyptian cavalry quite 5 miles down river north.

They nearly cut our cavalry off, but finding that they were mistaken in thinking that it was the Sirdar's main body, they returned, and crossing Kerreri Hill came on to attack us. That they pressed the Egyptian cavalry very close is amply shown by the 48 casualties, and about 60 in the Camel Corps.

Our guns were soon busy on the north front of our position, one of our new class gunboats also went down stream at full speed, and soon the shells were searching Kerreri Hill, and the mass of Dervishes broke up and fairly fled off the hill down on to the desert side. I could see them all running as hard as they could, through my glasses, and we were very much interested in the way the shells kept bursting about a large green flag that was hurrying and bobbing up and down. This force was apparently defeated, as the others had been, and we again thought that the battle was over, but again we were mistaken.

There was a very large force coming steadily on from the north-west, but this we in our part of the field could not see. Orders came to march on to Omdurman, and the British brigades started, our brigade being on their right, and the British next to the water. Macdonald's and Lewis' brigades followed, and also Collinson's, but Macdonald and Lewis were some way out in the desert. I have since heard that these two brigades saw the new large force of the Dervishes advancing upon them, and that Macdonald, after sending messages off to the Sirdar who was with us, and the British, changed front and waited their onslaught. Lewis, I *hear*, kept on following after us, saying his orders were to follow, and refused to halt. However, he eventually did halt and very soon these two brigades were heavily engaged with an enormous force of Dervishes with whom

was the great black flag of the Khalifa. The Khalifa was not with it, however; he was near the famous ridge to the south-west above mentioned, standing by the Krupp gun of the Dervishes which was shelling us. We, *i.e.*, the British, and Maxwell's brigade had topped this ridge; and I remember being much struck with the few men killed by our artillery fire, which had made splendid practice. I am certain that not more than 200 dead lay on this ridge. When we heard a tremendous fire from our *right rear*, Maxwell's brigade hastily changed direction from south to *west*, to relieve the pressure on Macdonald's and Lewis' brigades. As we drew near them the fight was practically over, and the Dervishes were beginning to stream off under a fierce fire from Macdonald and Lewis. They had charged our people, and came on in crowds to within 50 yards of Macdonald's Sudanese, only to fall in heaps under our withering fire. A crowd of fanatics surrounded the large black flag of the Khalifa; and as each standard bearer was killed, another sprang to the flag. At last the flag lay on the ground, and as the brigades advanced it was picked up and taken to the Sirdar.

In the meantime, *we* were hurrying across to the assistance of Macdonald and Lewis, who were very seriously pressed, and it looked at one time as if the Dervishes would have succeeded in getting hand to hand, in which case their numbers would have swept our people over. I saw that if I took my regiment more to the south than due west, that I should get on some high ground above the Dervishes, from which we could do tremendous execution. I went trotting along on my horse at the head of the battalion, the men doubling after me. Maxwell came up and said he wished I would not try and work independently, and ordered me

to continue due west, in the old direction. I did so, only at the end of it to be ordered to change and go back to where I was making for in the first instance! It was rather a pity, as we should have shot many more. But of course Maxwell was right, as he said at the time: "What you are doing may be the best thing, but I have to obey the Sirdar's order." The battle was now over in reality, and we all marched on due south for Omdurman.

The plain was covered with Dervishes, keeping a long way out in the desert, and all in a disorderly flight. The cavalry did not dare to molest them, but the field batteries fired at them, as they moved along parallel to us. Some prisoners (who had sprung up from beside a Krupp gun as we approached, and came running to me as I was riding some little way in front of the regiment, holding up their arms, throwing their rifles down, and I spared their lives) told me that the Khalifa had only just left this gun, and had fled on a fast camel. (This has been afterwards proved by other evidence.) Osman Azrak, who used to be the scourge of the frontier at Wady Halfa up to Assouân even, lay dead near the gun, with his camel close to him and all his baggage. Right and left the Dervish wounded were getting up and firing at us as we passed, and our men were shooting them dead.

At Khor Shumbat the whole force halted, and as there was water in the Khor we refilled. It was about one o'clock, the heat was awful and the men quite done. I there heard of the charge of the 21st Lancers. They charged some Dervish horsemen and suddenly came on a concealed Khor (a narrow ravine, what we call a *nullah* in India). They could not check their speed, and all came full gallop bang down among the rocks of this



Khor. Numbers of horses came over, about 60 men were killed and wounded, for there were about 2,000 Dervishes in the Khor, one officer killed and five wounded. Poor Grenfell of the Life Guards, who was attached to the 21st, was cut to pieces, his head split in two by a sword cut. The Lancers struggled through to the other side, and then when they could reform, began firing. I heard that Yakoob, the brother of the Khalifa, had been killed and that, as I expected, Osman Digna, the famous bolter of the Atbara, was romping into Omdurman an easy winner at the head of all the fugitives.

Maxwell's brigade and a British field battery were told that they would have the honour of first entering the citadel of Omdurman, and accordingly we marched on, the heat very bad. Rumours reached us that the Khalifa had gone to the "sur" (the great wall forming the reduit or citadel of Omdurman), that he was praying in the mosque, that 1,000 of his blacks were with him, and that all meant to die together.

The three regiments, 12th (mine), 13th and 14th Sudanese, kept well spread out on as broad a frontage as possible. But as the houses began to grow closer together, and regular streets formed, we had to march in fours.

At last we reached the outside of the "sur," or great wall. It is about 14 feet high and about 3 feet thick. However, in my opinion, the Khalifa was never there at all, and that is what the natives tell me in Omdurman now. They say that he rode straight back from the battle, drank at his house, and started off at once on fresh camels with his favourite women for the south, *en route* to the Kordofan. Two men came running up the street from the "sur" towards us, waving a white flag, and I thought they must be messengers from the

Khalifa to surrender. I advanced to meet them, taking two soldiers with me. They proved to be two Egyptians who had been in captivity since they had been taken in Hicks' massacre in the Kordofan in '83, and were overjoyed. But as they were talking, Graham, who had joined me, said "Look out, there is a man going to fire!" And turning, I saw our friend aiming at us from a house about 400 yards off. There was a puff of smoke, and a bullet snicked fairly close to us. In this way, and with the British field battery banging away, an hour or two passed, when suddenly word came that the Khalifa and his men had fled, and that the Sirdar had arrived in the mosque from the river side. The columns moved on, and we united by the mosque.

We camped outside Omdurman to the west of the Great Mosque, at the Khalifa's house on the parade ground called "El Ardar," where the Khalifa used to review his troops, and where he kept many of his wives. It is a very large house—my quarters now, and I am writing there.

We were very tired that night—dog tired. General Hunter came and woke me up and asked me if I knew whether poor Howard was a Roman Catholic or not, about burying him the next day. I did not know.

Several shots were fired during the night at us by fugitive Dervishes, and a few men were hit. The Dervish killed amount, I am told, to 10,000! The wounded must be much more—hundreds of them the next day were crawling down to the Nile—some fearfully wounded—imagine their suffering! Imagine the thirst through the night! Our losses are just over 500 killed and wounded, I hear, about the same as at the Atbara.

I think Gordon has been avenged now.

The next morning the force marched back to Khor Shumbat to encamp, the smells and filth in Omdurman being unendurable.

I have been sick off my horse with the smells. Words fail one to describe them. Dead donkeys and horses and dead Dervishes! I was left here with two battalions as O.C. troops, Omdurman. We buried poor Howard about 400 yards west of this house in the desert. General Hunter, General Rundle, myself and Captain Bainbridge being present, and Scudamore and Gregson, and James and Maude of the correspondents being present also. I felt very sorry, poor lad—and very sorry for his aunt, Lady Jeune.

To restore order in the town of Omdurman was no easy task. A city with a population estimated at about 150,000 inhabitants cannot be controlled at once with only two battalions.

I am collecting rifles and guns and ammunition and storing everything in the arsenal or "Beitel Amana." We have found ivory also, worth, I should say, about £4,000, a large quantity of armour and helmets and arms, but up to the present the Khalifa's treasure has escaped us. All the treasure was in charge of Yakoob, the Khalifa's brother. A number of boxes have been found empty; no doubt the inhabitants of the city, hearing which way the fight was going, made haste to loot everything.

The Mahdi's tomb was very interesting to see. The great dome, which can be seen miles off, was knocked about by shells from the gunboats, half one side being knocked away; and the same shell had wrecked the inside, while the tomb itself had suffered considerably. The green iron railing

round the tomb used to be in Gordon's garden at Khartoum.

On September 12th, Townshend resigned his commission in the Egyptian Army, and the British officers of the 12th Sudanese gave him a farewell dinner.

Ford-Hutchinson made a speech, and it was indeed a satisfaction to have it brought home to one how one's officers appreciate kindness and *camaraderie*. I know that Ford-Hutchinson meant every word. I had led the men in battle, and as he said, "every man in the regiment knew that I had led them." I felt very touched. I have found throughout the Egyptian Army a deal of jealousy. The Sirdar had made me a Bey, and had given me the command of a Sudanese regiment immediately I was appointed to the Egyptian Army, and there must have been a lot of jealousy and bad feeling about it among the older men who had been passed over for me. Naturally, I never went out of my way to please any one, and had kept myself very much to myself. And I leave the Egyptian Army without any regrets, except admiration for the Sirdar and General Hunter, who is a gallant fellow and a leader of men. The British officers who have served under me, like me, and are, I know, my friends. I am very sad at leaving my blacks, the old 12th Sudanese. They know me: they know that I am strict in all matters of disciplinet, and slack on all points concerning their beloved women! And lenient on little petty faults. They like this: and they know that I lead them in a fight, that I say, "*Come on*," not "*Go on*," and in that lies the whole secret of making, not only native, but European troops fight. When things are warm,

you must be prepared to lead the way, be your men Europeans or natives of India or the Sudan.

Townshend sailed from Omdurman on September 21st, 1898, and reached the Gare de Lyons on October 9th, where he was met by the Comtesse Cahen D'Anvers and his fiancée, her daughter Alice.

## CHAPTER X

ENGLAND, 1898: COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

TOWNSHEND paid two visits to England in the year 1898. The first was on short leave from the Sudan after the battle of the Atbara, and the second was after the fall of Khartoum, when he had resigned from the Egyptian Army, and came home to marry Mlle. Alice Cahen D'Anvers.

On his first visit he went straight to the Hotel Imperiale in Paris, where Madame Cahen D'Anvers had asked him to stay. At lunch in their house in the Rue de Bassano, the lovers came to an understanding.

*May 12.* At last we were together. I had long loved Alice Cahen D'Anvers and she loves me. Before luncheon, while we stood looking at the log fire in the library, I told her that whether I left the Sudan directly after Khartoum depended on her. If she would marry me I would leave it directly we had taken Khartoum. Then she said: "If it depends on me you will not stay in the Sudan very long." I drew her to me and kissed her, putting my arms round her dear neck. It was worth waiting for, and all I had suffered last year, to be rewarded like this.

The following letter is one of many written by him about this time. Townshend had many temporary *affaires de cœur*, but there is very little doubt that the only woman he really loved was the woman he made his wife.

My Own Dearest little Princess,  
Just a line to-night. I got your sweet letter

at Cairo, the one you wrote from Heidelberg, for which I do not know how to thank you. Only, little Princess, I have carried it in my pocket ever since. I will tell you, though, what I think of it. Do come with your mother to-morrow morning. I have begged her to come at 9.30. Is it too early, little Princess? I am just dying to see you and talk to you. I do not know how to pass the night. I am so impatient, and think how I have longed for months and months! You will find me looking very worn and old. I have never been fitter than I am now, only I suppose a hard life makes a chap look old, and the last year has been enough to make me look old, has it not? I have got your *drapeau* and I am going to give it to you when you come to-morrow morning. You sent me your love in your letter. You have mine, you know; only it is not worth as much as yours. Well, Alice dear, good-night, my sweet little Princess. God bless you, little girl! I feel grateful now that I have been spared in dangers to see you and your dear mother, though out there I did not care a blow what happened. Well, au revoir, just remember I am dying to see you, so please, little Alice, do come soon.

YOUR CHARLIE.

After a couple of days in Paris, he accompanied mother and daughter to their place at Champs, a château on the Marne. He describes it in his diary as a pretty old place with a lovely park and woods along the banks of the Marne, and gardens laid out in the Italian style. Townshend was very much in love.

*June 5.* To-day passed as a dream. Alice and I have settled all our plans, and we are to be married a month after I get home from Khartoum. Louise is so happy that I am really going

to be her son. After lunch Alice and I wandered all over the château. She showed me Madame de Pompadour's room where she stayed here with the King. . . . my own adored Alice, I love her with such a passionate love. Returned from Champs in time to dine at the Rue de Bassano. Alice has given me such beautiful gold sleeve links with her name on them.

*June 13.* Dined at the Rue de Bassano with the whole family, the two sisters of Alice and Madame Bauer, sister of Comtesse Cahen D'Anvers, and also Miss Glas, the German governess, who has been in the secret all the time, ever since St. Moritz in August, 1897. After dinner Alice whispered to me that she had told her father she "had made up her mind," and that it was all right. I found her father in the smoking-room and told him I had a confession to make to him, and that he must know what it was. He shook my hand warmly and said he quite approved of Alice's choice and added: "You have won my favourite daughter." I was quite touched and said: "You may trust her to me; I will be a good husband to her!" The engagement is to be announced officially when I start home after Khartoum. I have given Alice an emerald and diamond ring, and she has given me a locket with the date "June 5th, 1898."

Townshend thereupon returned to the Sudan, to play his part in the Battle of Omdurman and the taking of Khartoum, which has already been described. It was not until November that he was able to present himself in Paris.

On November 22nd they were married, at the Château de Champs-sur-Marne, at midday, according to the rite of the Church of England. Colonel Douglas Dawson, Military Attaché at the British



Embassy, was best man, and the ceremony was performed by the Rev. Dr. Noyes, Rector of the English Church in the Rue d'Aguesseau.

The Château de Champs has some pretension to historical interest. It was part of the domain of Noisy-le-Grand, and was built by Boisson de Veurvalet, farmer-general, in the reign of Louis XIV. The original owner fell into disgrace at Court and Louis gave the Castle to the unhappy Louise de la Vallière. It was occupied in the next century by Madame de Pompadour. The Marquise lived in it for three years and left several traces of her love of elegance and wealth. Her bedroom was ornamented with carved woodwork, showing her coat of arms—two turtle doves billing and cooing, which, considering her story, may be reckoned as one of the most appropriate efforts of a herald.

On December 1st, having returned to England and settled in his quarters in Park Place, St. James's, Townshend received the D.S.O. at the hands of the Queen.

## CHAPTER XI

### 1899: A YEAR OF UNCERTAINTY

TOWNSHEND was granted three months' leave and went to Paris to join his wife. He was also working for a transfer to the Line. It must be confessed that he was one of the most restless individuals in the whole of the Army. As soon as he obtained one appointment by the incessant wire-pulling among his influential friends, he thirsted for a change. If he had not been also one of the luckiest young soldiers of the day (witness his chances at Hunza Nagar, at Fort Gupis, at Chitral, and again in having command of a Sudanese regiment in the Omdurman campaign) he might never have emerged from the ordinary groove of alternate service in India and at home. But he was very keen on war and his superiors knew it. More than once, however, he nearly spoiled his chances by an ineradicable habit of grumbling, added to a perhaps pardonable vanity.

His first few days in Paris (staying with his wife's people) were taken up with visits and dinners and theatre parties. His comments on the Parisian stage of the day are amusing.

*Feb. 4.* Went to see a piece called "Chérie" at the Palais Royal, a piece which would not be allowed on the London stage for a moment, some of the things said in it are beyond what can be put under the heading of HOT.

*March 9.* Saw Mounet Sully as "Othello" and I think his gestures and ranting are absurd. I saw him last in 1890 in "Hamlet" and was much impressed by him then. Now, he makes me laugh!

*March 10.* Went to see "Le Vieux Marcheur" at the Variétés. This is the most CAYENNE piece I've ever seen. "Nouveau Jeu" and "Dame de chez Maxime" were bad enough, but this out-herods Herod!

Townshend obtained his six months' extension of leave. After a short absence in London to arrange this, and, incidentally, to visit the Empire and hear his favourite, Arthur Roberts, sing three songs ("For which he gets £120 a week") he rejoined his wife in Paris. But he could not rest quiet and spend his six months doing nothing but amuse himself. He seems to have relinquished the idea of a transfer to the line, having been somewhat snubbed by Lord Wolseley when asking for it, and he took up the idea of a staff appointment instead.

*April 8.* I have made up my mind to start for India by the P. & O. boat leaving Marseilles on April 20th, getting my leave converted into Indian leave and going straight up to Simla. This I do because I am trying for a staff appointment on the Army Headquarters Staff at Simla.

Young Faudel Phillips told me that his father would give £40,000 for Balls Park, Hertford. He said that his father would not give more and suggested that I should take over the mortgages from the Duke of Wellington.

The Townshend affairs were in a very bad way at that time. Balls Park, which had come into the family by the marriage of the third Viscount Townshend with the heiress Audrey Harrison, in 1723, had been let to Sir G. Faudel Phillips, and the mortgages on that estate and on Raynham Hall were very heavy. Townshend was very anxious to save Raynham Hall because it had been in the Towns-

hend family since the reign of Henry III. But he was not so interested in Balls Park.

*April 9.* After consultation with my father-in-law this morning *apropos* of the Townshend estates we called on Sir G. Faudel Phillips at the Hotel Chatham. The result of our conversation was that I wrote to Lord St. Levan saying that I would cross from Paris to London as I wished to see him about doing something towards paying off the mortgages on the estates.

*April 12.* Met Sir G. Faudel Phillips and his son and Mr. Hawks, who told me the total amount of the mortgages. The whole thing seems to me to be as complicated as the stuffing of a clock.

Nothing was definitely concluded at the time. The interests involved were confusing, several members of the family having first charges on the estate. In the end, Sir G. Faudel Phillips bought the Balls estate with most of the contents of the house, as it stood. The affairs of the Norfolk estates were left over for a future date.

Two days after his visit to Norfolk, Townshend again altered his plans, cancelled his booked passage to India and decided not to go there till the autumn. He brought his wife over from Paris and settled in Park Place, St. James's, in the chambers belonging to his cousin, Captain Edward ("Bean") St. Aubyn.

*May 1.* Inspection of the Brigade of Guards by Lord Wolseley in Hyde Park. At the conclusion of the show (which I hear was awful) he called all the mounted officers and Adjutants to the front and said: "This is the worst inspection I have ever seen, and the drill is beneath contempt." He then rode off the ground.

*May 6.* Alice and I went down to Raynham Hall, as I have to overhaul the letters in the lumber room with a view to writing the Life of the first Marquis. I have gone through piles of them all ranging from 1600 to 1790, some of them of great interest to the nation especially those of Lord Townshend, the ambassador at the Hague in the time of Marlborough and Walpole, also the rebellion of 1715 and 1746 when a Townshend was Secretary of State, and those relating to Quebec. I know now all about the mortgage on the estates. Lord Townshend and the ladies of the family who have charges on the estate all prefer Balls Park. Their one idea is to keep it in the family if possible. They were all born there and their father before them. But I propose to buy Raynham and 5,000 acres round it, and let them sell all the rest of the 18,000 acres. In this way, the mortgages will be paid off; Lord Townshend and his son after him can live at Balls, and Raynham Hall will not go out of the family.

In the early summer he took his wife to see the Marine Barracks at Plymouth:

. . . where I first began my soldiering. I have learned by experience since that the groundwork I received as regards drill and discipline was an excellent one. I have seen many corps now, but I have never seen better men than they have in the Royal Marines. I do not regret that I left the Corps. There is no promotion beyond Colonel in the Marines. For an officer, it is a case of: "Leave all hope ye who enter here."

In December, 1880, I was up for the last examination at Sandhurst. If I remember rightly, there were 750 of us for 90 vacancies, and I was two or three places out when the list appeared. My only chance I thought was to go through the Militia,

but this meant another two or three years in the Militia. Then it turned out that four or five extra commissions were needed in the Marines and I was suddenly one. So I took it on the "bird in the hand" principle! From the beginning I got active service and I changed into the Indian Staff Corps after the Nile Expedition of 1884-85, realising that I could not succeed if I remained in the Marines, and I do not think anyone would tell me I had made a mistake. I am well up on the list of Lieut.-Colonels in the Army, now.

I noticed the men were very young in barracks, and I asked whether the Admiralty could send away a battalion of Marines at two days' notice—long service, seasoned soldiers—as they did to Ashanti, Zululand, Egypt ('82) and Sudan ('84). He said: "We have not got the men now: they are all on board ship. All we can supply is Lieut.-Colonels and we have plenty of them!"

*May 10.* Attended a levée at St. James's Palace with Bean St. Aubyn, being presented "on return from active service." Bean had been staying at Somerleyton Hall (Sir Saville Crossley's) to meet the Prince of Wales.\* He said the Prince had a regular row with Lord Albemarle at a dance, and called him a "bumptious prig!"

The following is a copy of some extracts from a letter written to Winston Churchill who was writing "The River War," and who wished Townshend to look at his book:—

Dear Churchill,

Very good about next week. I think it would be the best if you would let me have a look at the work you are writing some morning before lunch, and I would, perhaps, on points you are doubtful about,

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\*Afterwards King Edward VII.

clear up the situation. It has struck me since I wrote that you might possibly think I was discontented perhaps with the Sirdar by my writing as I did, but not for a moment! Few men in the Army have had such rapid advancement as I have. Buller gave me to understand that it was the first time a Captain had received the C.B. and I have had now six campaigns (counting Atbara and Omdurman as one). So it is not likely that I am discontented and wanting to (as a matelot might put it) "shove my oar in." The British Public have made over a job well done and well rewarded—not to say over-rewarded, and the consequence is that the Sirdar, Hunter, Macdonald and Co. get a reputation—perhaps greater than they can uphold. The self-advertisement of some people in the "River War" as you call it (a very good name) also appeals to me. . . . Perhaps you will let me know some day next week when we can meet. I go to France in ten days' time, as I am tired of London. As regards the developments of the Sudan, I confess one needs "Faith." I suppose you remember the definition the Charity boy gave of Faith when asked by the school examiners to describe it? "Faith," he said, "is a firm belief in something which you know to be perfectly untrue." I don't know whether he was sent to the top or the bottom of the class for his answer, but he might of course have been thinking of women, wine or the Indian Turf.

Yours sincerely,

CHARLES TOWNSHEND.

P.S.—My diaries are packed up in some baggage in Paris at my people's house; but I can give you any *renseignements* you want without your wading through all the stuff I have written.

Rumours of the unrest in South Africa were very

rife at this time, and as usual when there were any whispers of a coming war Townshend was on the *qui vive*. He had written again to Sir Redvers Buller, on June 11th, to ask him for a transfer to the Line, but on the 12th he wrote both to Sir Evelyn Wood and to Buller to ask them to do their best to get him employment, should active operations be undertaken against the Boers.

*July 13.* Receive telegram from Commander-in-Chief, India, offer of Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General, Punjab Army, and have accepted. I go out to India in October from Marseilles in P. & O. *Egypt*. This going to the Staff will suit me very well. I can work to effect my exchange to a Line regiment and join the next regiment at the expiration of my Staff appointment.

*Aug. 1.* Sir Redvers Buller told Lord St. Levan that he was glad I had been given this Staff appointment. It put my foot in the stirrup, and I had now a big career in front of me.

Townshend set out to join his wife and her people at Bad Gastein on August 5th. While in this neighbourhood Townshend follows his invariable plan of paying a visit to any great battle-field in the vicinity. In this case it was Dettingen, where the allied troops were commanded by George II in person, the last time an English sovereign appeared on a field of battle. He was specially interested, since his ancestor, the first Marquis Townshend, had been present at the fight.

Nothing has changed in the country round Dettingen, I should say, since the day of the battle, except that the railway to Frankfort runs through the valley along the north bank of the Main. There is a tiny little sentry-box of a station at Dettingen, and I should say that where the



station stands must have been about the centre of the allied line in the first phase of the battle.

Townshend was then engaged in writing the Life of the first Marquis, and for that purpose, after visiting the field of Dettingen, he turned towards Tournay, in Belgium, near which is the site of the battle of Fontenoy. He says in his diary:

. . . Drove out to Fontenoy, which is about five miles south of Tournay, and spent some time on the field of battle. Nothing is changed since April 30th, 1745, the date of the battle. I was much struck with the good position Marshal Saxe had taken up. Made many useful notes, which I have put into the rough notes for my book.

*Oct. 5.* Alice and I came up from Champs to Rue de Bassano, having arranged to dine together and say good-bye, as I am leaving Marseilles the same night. I went to the Rue Tocqueville to say good-bye also to Lord Townshend\*, and I was very glad to get away. He broke down at our interview and cried. He told me he had been very ill and from what the doctors told him he might go off at any time. Thinking of this, he said he had prepared a few notes for me which he wished me to read when I had started on my journey—and this I have done. He said that death would be far preferable to the agony he suffered from suppressed gout. Being also sad at parting from Alice, this parting from Lord Townshend did not tend to enliven me. But the brave little girl bore up well.

On board the *Egypt* Macdonald and Townshend of course had a long talk about the prospects in South Africa. Townshend says that Macdonald thought that the best chance of success for the Boers would be for them to take the initiative and invade Natal: that their success would be very brief if our

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\* Fifth Marquis Townshend.

troops remained on the defensive behind entrenchments. That, when Buller got out and concentrated all his force, his advance to Pretoria would be irresistible: that the Boers would then split up into guerilla bands, and that Buller's trouble would then begin by his having to split up his force into flying columns and clear up the country in different directions.

It should be noted that Macdonald was not far wrong. For he could not be expected to foresee that General Buller would entirely change his plan, and advance through Natal instead of directly on Pretoria from Cape Town.

Townshend arrived at Bombay on October 20th. The A.A.G. immediately wired to D.A.G. Punjab Army to notify him of his arrival, but not till October 23rd did Townshend receive (from the Military Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief) the following curious telegram: "Sorry vacancy could not be kept open longer. You should rejoin regiment. Your claims will however not be overlooked when opportunities offer."

Townshend came to Simla to state his case before his old friend Lord Curzon, who was now Viceroy.

He was quite glad to see me, and Lady Curzon was also very nice to me. We had a long chat and much laughter, the Viceroy referring to the famous supper I stood him at the Savoy in '95 when he was on one side of Arthur Roberts and Kitchener on the other. He asked me where Alice was. He told me that Sandbach had told him they had filled up my Punjab appointment while I was at home, saying nothing to me, and I also told him how I had lost my opportunity of going to the Cape with Buller, as I thought I was doing the correct thing in not making a catspaw of the appointment and taking another one. We went

to Sandbach's carriage, and he showed me a wire to the Military Secretary of the Commander-in-Chief, which said I had seen the Viceroy, and that his Excellency hoped the matter would be put right for me. Lady Curzon is looking just as pretty as she was in '95, when I first met her.

On arriving at Simla, the first news that met him was a telegram from his wife and one from the solicitor announcing the death of the fifth Marquis Townshend, by which he became the heir to the title and the estates. He had died just three weeks after Townshend had seen him when he said he might go off at any time. This was a very serious affair, and he saw the necessity of going home on leave as soon as possible, the affairs of the estates and property in general being in the greatest disorder.

He had much difficulty in obtaining this leave. Eventually he sailed in the *Arabia*, but not before he had written a long letter of complaint to Lord Curzon.

On reaching Paris, he was met by his wife and stayed a few days with her people before proceeding to England to report at the India Office and see what could be done towards getting out to the Cape. He met several old friends, among them "Curly" Stewart, his former colleague on the North-West Frontier. On January 21st, his daughter was born. He had been afraid that he would have been away on duty when the event took place, and was delighted to think he was with his wife at the time. Finally, he at last received the sanction of the India Office to proceed on "Special Service" to South Africa. This was doubtless due to the personal friendship which Lord Curzon had all along evinced for him. He said good-bye to his wife and set out for London on January 31st, 1900, *en route* for South Africa.

## CHAPTER XII

### SOUTH AFRICA: THE BOER WAR

ON January 27th, 1900, Townshend received a letter from Sir Coleridge Grove regretting that the India Office declined to agree to his being sent out to South Africa on special service: but on the following day there was a telegram from Sir John Gordon at the India Office informing him that the Government of India had sanctioned his being "lent to the War Office for special service in South Africa, pending his exchange to the Line." He was graded as A.A.G. and sailed from Southampton on February 8th on the transport *Armenian* with the 7th Dragoon Guards.

Townshend was ever a stickler for his rights! He found that the Colonel in command of the 7th D.G. (Colonel Lowe) was his junior, but that nevertheless Colonel Lowe had been told he was to be in command during the voyage. Townshend immediately referred the matter to the Staff Officer who was superintending the embarkation of the troops, and was told that he (Townshend) was going out as a passenger, just as Generals were sent out as passengers, with some junior officer with a regiment on board doing O.C. troops.

I said "very good": but if any case of emergency by chance arose I should take command. And he said: "Of course in case of emergency you would do so."

On arrival at St. Vincent they got news of the progress of the war. By this time the worst of the disasters and the "regrettable incidents" which cast

a gloom over the early stages of the war were over. Kimberley had been relieved by General French; Roberts had crossed the Modder River on his way up country, and Ladysmith was on the point of being relieved. Spirits rose in consequence.

The *Armenian* reached Table Bay on March 1st, and they at once saw that something "good" had happened for all the ships in the Bay were gaily dressed with flags.

We passed the *Majestic* at anchor. She was about a quarter of a mile away and crowded with troops. They flag-wagged from the bridge as we were passing: "Ladysmith relieved! Cronje and 4,000 Boers taken prisoners!" Tremendous cheering broke from our soldiers when they knew what it all meant. Table Bay was studded with ships. I never saw so many ships together. Huge liners and small dirty-looking ocean tramps and large sailing ships laden with coal lay side by side at anchor.

Townshend received orders to proceed direct to Orange River and there await further instructions from Headquarters. He then went to the Post Office for letters, knowing that the mail steamer had left Southampton only two days after the *Armenian*.

I was much depressed to find no letters from my darling Alice.

Arrived at Orange River, the Commandant wired to Lord Roberts' Chief-of-Staff notification of his arrival and asked for further orders. Townshend also sent a wire to Lord Methuen at Kimberley asking him to apply for him; and received a reply telling him to go on to Kimberley.

Arrived at Kimberley, he was welcomed cordially by Lord Methuen who would have liked to have him on his staff "for his business" (presumably the

relief of Mafeking) but that Headquarters had wired to know what authority he had for coming out at all! This necessitated communicating with Lord Kitchener, Chief-of-Staff to Roberts, and sending him copies of Sir Evelyn Wood's letter authorising him to come out and also of the India Office's permission for him to work for the War Office pending an exchange into the Line.

*March 9.* Started with convoy on my way to Headquarters. Slept in a waggon on a heap of sacks and had to give up all idea of undressing. At Padanfontein I met the Sirdar with Gorringe and Watson. I had a talk with the latter (Kitchener's A.D.C.) and he told me that Lord Roberts had now thirteen A.D.C.'s most of them peers and not regular officers. People like Lord Dudley and the Duke of Westminster.

*March 11.* Rumours that the convoy ahead of us was attacked by the Boers. I sent for all the N.C.O.'s and told them that I could have no more slackness. Men must have pouches on them, not taken off, in the case of those allowed to ride in the waggons. I put Lieut. Hall of the Yorkshire Light Infantry in charge of all the details, amounting to 70 men (D.C.L.I.), Gordons, and Carabiniers. Every military precaution ordered to be taken on the line of march, and outpost arrangements to be very strict. I told Hall myself what I wanted done and visited them at night.

*March 14.* I received a message by a Mounted Infantry Sergeant and escort at midday from General Tucker, commanding 7th Division, saying that the General was surprised I had not communicated my whereabouts and composition of my convoy and that I was to send the information back by bearer, and that the General wished me

to join him as soon as possible. I reached Panfontein and went to him to report my arrival.

Townshend here reports at length, and what he says is very comical. The General was at dinner, and being informed that Colonel Townshend had arrived with a convoy, came out dressed in a uniform jacket and pyjamas ("dinner kit") and shouted out: "What do you mean by taking command of my convoy? Who are you?" "I took command as being senior officer." "You might have been right, but I wish you hadn't." He added: "On what authority are you here? I don't know you!" And much more of the same kind. On seeing his papers the General, of course, recognised his position and offered to take him on with his division or that he should ride on alone with an escort of Mounted Infantry. Naturally, Townshend chose the latter course. He arrived at Bloemfontein on March 16th.

Here fresh difficulties awaited him. Colonel Neville Chamberlain, Private Secretary to Lord Roberts, was most kind, but pointed out that the difficulty was that he was so senior a Lieut.-Colonel, senior to most of the Colonels there. All billets were filled, but he thought Townshend should remain at Headquarters till a vacancy occurred on the staff. But there was another chance:—

Would I care to undertake a mission that Lord Roberts wanted carried out? I said I would be delighted. It was to visit Wepener, on the Basutoland border, and also Maseru, just inside Basutoland, where it was reported that large bodies of Boers were inclined to surrender to the British if an officer of rank were sent. I accepted.

Townshend saw the Field-Marshal and it was arranged that he should start on his travels the next morning. Neville Chamberlain promised all the

assistance in his power. He also belonged to the Central India Horse; he and Townshend were old friends and had last met at Fort Gupis in the Yasin country on the North-West Frontier. Of course, Townshend wanted the command of a fighting unit, and he was therefore very disappointed on being informed the next day that Lord Roberts had altered his mind about employing him for the Basutoland mission, and that he would be appointed A.A.G. to General Pretymán, Military Governor of Bloemfontein. This meant a long period of office work for which he was not at all suited, though, as was his invariable habit, he performed all his duties most conscientiously and correctly, while chafing at the idea of not being with the fighting soldiers and leading a regiment of his own to victory.

*March 19.* I have been quill-driving from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. with one hour for lunch. General Pretymán took me into his office and discussed the work to be done, and it is a very big job indeed. The Military Governor is to be Governor of the whole Free State, as well as Bloemfontein, which will become a large arsenal and magazine and depôt of provisions with at least a brigade of troops to hold it. The General told me that all the troops will be in my command, also the civil part of the Government of the country, customs, schools, trade, etc. The General asked me to work out some scheme to submit to him. I am afraid I shall not see any fighting, but my work will be the most important I have ever done and give me a great responsibility.

He was much cheered by a visit from his old Brigadier, General Macdonald, who was in command of the Highland Brigade. He at once set to work to master his multifarious duties with that thorough-



ness he had always shown in his work since he was first gazetted to a commission in the Royal Marines.

*March 21.* Went round all the public buildings in Bloemfontein with the Military Governor, including barracks, jails, powder magazines, schools and a museum. £120,000 has been found in one bank and £140,000 in the other, and securities to the value of half a million. We have taken over all of it! They were in such a hurry to bolt that they left all that Government money behind to fall into our hands.

*March 22.* Dined with Gwynne\* of Reuters: saw Burleigh of the *Daily Telegraph*, Ralph of the *Daily Mail*, London of *The Times* and Admiral Maxse. Gwynne told me that the German military attaché with our army here told him that he thought our infantry the finest in the world. In his opinion they were far beyond his own and the Turks: their advance under the fire they had to sustain was magnificent. There is a lot of anti-British feeling here and I expect the place is a hotbed of intrigue. I have ordered to-day the arrest of an Irish Fenian, O'Carroll, who had the impudence to advertise in the *Express* calling on all Irish Fenians in South Africa to concentrate and that orders would soon come from him! I also hear of a tobacconist who openly wears Boer colours, and him I am going to muzzle also.

*April 3.* I find this office work very wearisome, I am at it all day. Not a moment even to write a private letter: and it is very difficult to get through any real work as the office is crowded all day with people wanting to see me on all sorts of subjects.

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\* Now Editor of the *Morning Post*.

By April 16th Townshend had become very disgruntled and his diary is full of strictures on other people. Even his cousin, one of his closest friends, "Bean" St. Aubyn comes in for a share of his satire.

Fancy Bean St. Aubyn being made D.A.A.G. to Buller! But perhaps the excellent training he had received at the Bachelors Club fitted him for the post of D.A.A.G. to the General commanding the forces in Natal.

He gives a list of the A.D.C.'s and special officers surrounding Lord Roberts at this time. It makes very pretty reading "a sort of extract from the Peerage, with a few names of untitled officers thrown in here and there." Lord Downe, Lord Stanley (Press Censor), Earl of Dudley (D.A.A.G. for Yeomanry), Lord Settrington, Lord Herbert Scott, The Earl of Kerry, Honble. Seymour Fortescue, Viscount Acheson, Duke of Marlborough, all among the numerous A.D.C.'s and many others. Many of these officers were in the Militia or Yeomanry.

Townshend's restlessness overtook him once more at the time when the more optimistic among the soldiers thought that the war was drawing to a close, though it had yet a year to run. In spite of his hopes for a transfer to the Line with the possibility of a command of some kind in England, we now find him writing to Lord Chermside to beg his remembrance of him, in case of his getting the administration of the Transvaal after the war. So that at one and the same moment he is asking for a command at home and for a billet in South Africa! Just at this time he was arranging for his wife and mother-in-law to pay him a visit, and was looking forward to seeing them in about the second week in June.

May 29. The *Tantallon Castle* arrived about 11 a.m. Alice and her mother looked very well. I was so delighted to have my loved wife again. They were not at all pleased with their voyage: the ship was slow and very dirty and the cooking execrable.

Just after their arrival Townshend received intelligence from Sir John Gordon that his transfer to the Bedfordshire regiment had at last been sanctioned. He thereupon writes to Lord Lansdowne to express a hope that his transfer to the Irish Guards could be effected direct, without an intermediate transfer to the Bedfordshire regiment.

July 3. Baron Lutwitz, the German military attaché, a very charming fellow, and Lord Kesteven (a Lieutenant though over fifty years of age) dined with us last night. . . . Our dinners are quite famous now since Alice has joined me here. Lord Castletown and his wife, Lord Acheson, Mrs. Murray Guthrie, Lord Fincastle, Major Twiss, Director of Military Railways, and many others, as *Vanity Fair* might say, dine with us frequently. . . . I told Lutwitz all about the picture of Belisarius by Salvator Rosa.\* He said he would tell the Emperor about it. Lord Kesteven, who is a type of old Jorrocks, said that the war had shown him what b——y fools our generals are. Not only will they do nothing but are very jealous of anyone else doing anything either! Kesteven is quite right!

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\*This famous painting was a present from the King of Prussia to the first Marquis Townshend. When it was thought Napoleon might succeed in his invasion of England, Lord Townshend had the picture safely "buried" for he thought it would be the first piece of loot the Emperor would go for! The painting now hangs in the hall of Vere Lodge which Sir Charles Townshend made into a stately home for himself and his family, worthy to contain the heirlooms and valuable paintings which used to be at Raynham Hall and were dispersed by the sixth Marquis.

The transfer to the Irish Guards seemed indefinitely postponed, for on July 18th Townshend received a wire from the A.A.G. in Capetown to say that the Military Secretary in London had inquired whether a Majority in the Royal Fusiliers would be acceptable to him. Townshend at once wired back accepting the offer, though he was considerably puzzled as to what had become of Lord Lansdowne's offer for the Guards.

On August 6th came a letter from Lord Lansdowne stating that there would be insuperable difficulties in transferring him in the rank of Captain to the Guards, and confirming his offer of a Majority in the Royal Fusiliers.

On August 19th Townshend received his final orders for home, and left for Cape Town and England.

Thus ended, ingloriously, his experience of the Boer War. He was in South Africa from the middle of February to the end of August only. He was working all the time at the most uncongenial work under a most uncongenial General. He never heard a shot fired, nor saw any service in the field. It was hardly the best use to make of a man who had so distinguished himself in India and in Egypt. He was not an easy man to get on with—in regimental or staff work—but as a fighter and leader of men in the field he was better than most.

## CHAPTER XIII

### HOME AGAIN

THE *Kildonan Castle* in which the Townshends sailed arrived at Southampton on October 5th. After reporting himself at the War Office, Townshend obtained a month's leave, paid a short visit to Dover to make the acquaintance of his new Colonel and brother officers of the Royal Fusiliers, and then saw his wife off to Paris to join her parents. At a further interview at the War Office with Sir Evelyn Wood who, as usual, was very nice to him, he learned to his great disappointment that his Battalion was not going to Cairo after all, and that in all probability he would once more be condemned to a life of inaction in barracks for some little time. His leave was also reduced to a fortnight as the Colonel was short of officers, and he had to rejoin after a very short visit to Champs.

*Oct. 22.* My new uniform finished this morning by Johns and Pegg of 2 Clifford Street, and I got down to Dover in time to dress for mess, finding myself in a red coat again which I had not worn since I left the Marines for the India Staff Corps in January, 1886.

Four days after he had rejoined his new regiment Townshend asked for leave to go to Paris to see the end of the Paris Exhibition, and was refused as he was required to command a force of 200 men on a Field Day! He now realized that in changing South Africa (where there was always a war on!) for a regiment at home he had gone from bad to worse.

As he notes in his diary: "I am now finding out what damned nonsense soldiering at home is!"

*Oct. 26.* Dover [he writes] needs no comment or description—a dirty, dull little town with absolutely nothing to do. One cannot ride or drive in Dover, as it lies on the slip of ground between high cliffs, and it is difficult to get up and down the hills.

*Oct. 27.* Went up to London and found that the arrival of the famous C.I.V.'s at Southampton has been delayed and that all London is crowded with disappointed sightseers. My cousin Agnes Townshend dined with me at the Walsingham, and we went afterwards to Daly's and saw "San Toy." Agnes looks as pretty and as charming as ever. Supper afterwards at the Savoy, though I do not know well how I got her round there through the streets crowded with drunken London natives, and there were no cabs, of course.

*Oct. 29.* The famous C.I.V.'s arrived opposite the Naval and Military Club about 2.20 p.m. The London streets were an unforgettable sight as regards the mass of people. The C.I.V.'s did not look bad in their khaki and slouch hats. The Guards on their return from the Crimea did not receive half such a reception.

He became more and more restless as the time passed. On November 13th he succeeded in getting long leave till December 31st, settling down with his wife in Park Place, St. James's. His avowed object was now to get on the staff again as soon as possible, though it was only a short time since he had pulled strings in all directions to get away from a staff appointment and back to regimental duty!

. . . I find that work in a line regiment in an English town like Dover is pure *opéra comique*, especially if one is not in command of the regiment. My work consists of inspecting the kits of recruits, in fact keeping them clean, and listening to the tirades of a terrible C.O. of Infantry in the Orderly Room. One lives on Courts Martial and on Boards; and I never saw such a place as Dover for rain.

Townshend was itching to get back into the fighting line again, and though he had just got away from South Africa with some difficulty, yet it was the only country where any fighting was to be had for a certainty, so he once more begged Sir Evelyn Wood to get him employed out there. He was, however, refused (as might have been expected), the excuse being that no more officers would be sent out to the Staff in South Africa, the drift being rather of a homeward turn.

On his return to London early in December, Townshend found himself in the midst of family complications resulting from the impoverished state of the family finances. The sixth Marquis, who had only succeeded to the title at a comparatively recent date, had hardly enough to live upon, such were the charges on the estates, which were mortgaged up to the hilt and moreover surcharged with heavy jointures for his mother and other members of the family. All the estates were let. Raynham Hall, in the family since the days of Henry III, to Sir Edmund Lacon on a twenty-one years' lease: Balls Park, Hertford, had for a tenant Sir George Faudel Phillips, and Stiffkey Hall and other houses were also let. It was now proposed to sell Balls Park, and it became a question of whether Townshend himself should buy it, supposing he could raise the necessary amount. The ladies of the family were

very anxious that he should do so. They had all been born there and had much more affection for the place than for Raynham Hall. But Townshend's solicitor and his father-in-law were dead against it.

He was, of course, obliged to be much mixed up in the family affairs. At the death of the sixth Marquis (who was not supposed to be of a very strong constitution) he would succeed to the title and the estates. His consent was therefore necessary before any definite steps could be taken for the sale of the estates or the dispersal of any of the valuable heirlooms.

At this time, besides being much engaged in correspondence on the subject of the family estates, Townshend was finishing a book he had written on the Military Life of the first Marquis Townshend, his own great-great-grandfather, and had sent it to John Murray to see if it was worth publishing. At the same time he was busily pulling strings in every direction to get out of England again, either to India, or Egypt, or back to the Cape with a fighting unit. He wrote to Wingate, the Sirdar of the Egyptian army, saying that he had heard the French were advancing on Darfur from the direction of Lake Chad, and asked for an appointment in any consequent expedition to the Egyptian army. This was on December 19th. On the 22nd he saw the D.A.G. at the War Office (General Laye) with reference to getting out again to South Africa. But General Laye told him that he and Sir Evelyn Wood had decided he could not be given a command as the troops going out were drafts only: though they promised him his name should be noted if new troops went out.

*Jan. 22, 1901.* The Queen, who had been seriously ill since Saturday, died at 6.30 p.m. to-day and the nation is in mourning.



*Jan. 31.* It was known on the 29th that our regiment has to furnish a guard of honour of three officers and 100 rank and file to march in the procession of the funeral next Saturday. I asked Colonel Annesley to let me command this guard, as I have been twice decorated by the Queen. But he said that it was the turn of Du Maurier, as I had been on the guard for the arrival of the King of Portugal. The Battalion is to line the streets.

*Feb. 2.* Arrived at Charing Cross at 5 a.m. for funeral of the Queen. Battalion marched to some drill hall in Westminster where the men got breakfast, and then at 7.45 for Hyde Park Corner, and lined the road between there and Stanhope Gate. We were in position at 8.15 a.m. and remained in the cold till 12.30, when the procession passed. We were all resting on our arms reversed. The whole thing was most solemn and striking, vast crowds of silent people uncovered, and most eloquent of all—the gun-carriage with the coffin. The King looked every inch a king, riding between the Emperor of Germany and the Duke of Connaught. The Emperor of Germany who, like the King, was in the uniform of an English Field-Marshal, looked to me worn and ill. Everyone wore cloaks or greatcoats. They say it was the Emperor of Germany who had organised everything. Colonel Sandbach told me (he got it from Prince Christian) that *it was even he who measured the Queen's body for the coffin!*

His friends all advised Townshend to stick to his job at present. Lord Lansdowne advised him not to move just yet, and some time afterwards he got a distinct snub from the Military Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief, in which he was informed that "it is not considered desirable for officers to

urge their own advancement in the manner in which you have continued to do for some time past in private letters to the Military Secretary, and . . . such claims should be put forward by an officer on full pay through usual channels of communication."

*Feb. 20.* The Colonel I find, is trying to "twist my tail," now that he knows I want to go to the Staff and am not content to serve on here in the proud position of Company Commander! He has given me the regimental workshops accounts as well as the company accounts, and I am given no subaltern!

In the middle of April Townshend was transferred to Hounslow to command the dépôt of the Royal Fusiliers, and took up his residence in Hounslow barracks, his wife returning to France until plans for the future were more settled.

. . . I found ideas about uniform very slack, and I ordered swords to be worn on all parades, and the red coat to be worn on all duties under arms. I also ordered that prisoners' defaulters' sheets should be shown to me NOT by the colour sergeants but by the O.C. company.

His book on the "Military Life of the first Marquis Townshend" was published at that time, and received some most appreciative reviews in the Press. He was much mortified that he had not been able to obtain Wolfe's Order Book and other important documents which he knew had been in the possession of the first Marquis, in time for inclusion in his book. After it was published he got all these documents which had been lent by Mr. Day, the agent at Raynham (on his own authority), to the Historical Commission who had kept them for ten years!

Much of the diary is here taken up with proposals

to buy (or not to buy) Balls Park, which eventually was sold to Sir Faudel Phillips for nearly eighty thousand pounds.

His account of a day with the de Valon stag-hounds, near his father-in-law's seat at Champs may be worth mention :—

. . . the place reminds me somewhat of Versailles. The Château of the Duc d'Aumale stands in a lake giving one the idea of a Rhine castle, with its gables and turrets, only everything is handsome and magnificent. We went all over the place and saw everything, the dining-hall and the tapestries, the enormous rooms and the galleries, the forest, park and lake. The stables built by the great Condé in the seventeenth century are the size of a cathedral, with a great vaulted dome in the centre, and should be able to accommodate three hundred horses. It was a wise act of the Duc d'Aumale to make this royal gift to the nation and a perpetual monument to himself, and what revenge on the Republic, which forced him to resign his commission in the French Army because he was a brother of the exiled King of France!

*Nov. 21.* A good run with the de Valon stag-hounds. Drove to Florentine village to breakfast at the sign of the "Grand Cerf D'Or," about seventeen miles from Chantilly, on the borders of the great forest of Arlatte. After breakfast, de Valon, myself, Villiers Stuart and other members of the Hunt rode to the meet in the forest. The members of the Hunt were dressed in the old-fashioned long-skirted coats with large deep cuffs of the time of Louis XIV, white breeches and ordinary hunting top-boots. The huntsmen and whippers-in wear the same kit, but had also three-cornered hats and big black jack-boots.

They looked like pictures of dragoons of a hundred and fifty years ago. The uniform for members of the Hunt is blue, with gold braiding and red cloth for the men. They all carried big French horns. The ladies of the Hunt are dressed in blue, with three-cornered hats quite in the old style, and the effect is very pretty. As soon as a stag had been located by a few of the hounds, de Valon brought up the whole of the pack and away we streamed over an open plain towards a large forest on the hills. De Valon had mounted me splendidly. He and I and Villiers Stuart and a young French officer of Hussars were the only ones who rode throughout with the hounds, for as soon as we entered the forest some of them began to make short cuts down roads, and for the greater part of the run we hardly saw anyone. We were galloping the whole time through the trees in the forest. The run lasted about an hour and a half. We killed the stag at a village called Pont St. Maxence. He was at bay in a running stream and eventually died in a garden. I was given *les honneurs du pied de cerf*. The hoof was cut off and presented to me amidst a general fanfare of horns. It appears that it is a very great honour, this! It was the first time I had hunted in France; and one can enjoy the day very much, if one rides with the hounds.

Meanwhile, matters were advancing in quite another direction. On May 22nd, 1902, he wrote to General Sir William Nicholson, offering to take a trip to Canada, at his own expense, to report on the strategical roads which the Americans would take in case of an invasion of Canada, and asking for two months' special leave in which to do it.

The offer was accepted and leave duly applied for. On May 31st, peace was at last signed at

Vereeniging, and the war of nearly three years was at an end.

Townshend had a week in France with his wife's relations and on June 12th embarked on board the Allan Line S.S. *Numidian* at Liverpool for Quebec.

## CHAPTER XIV

### CANADA AND HOME SERVICE

TOWNSHEND was informed that he would be granted two months' leave in which to visit Canada, but that he would be expected to undertake it entirely at his own expense. At the same time, the Government would be very glad to read whatever notes he might make on points likely to be of interest. He was given letters of introduction to Lord Minto, then Governor-General of Canada, and to other persons who could be of service to him. His great-great-grandfather George, first Marquis Townshend, played a chief part at the siege and capture of Quebec, and having just published his "Life" of this ancestor, Townshend was anxious to see the actual terrain of all the operations which ended in this vast country becoming a portion of the Empire.

He most certainly felt that he would be a person of considerable importance in the eyes of Canadians. (He was never lacking in a sense of his own importance!) But, to do him justice, his first consideration was to see for himself the scene of the military operations of the eighteenth century, fraught with so much consequence to England. Though a mere dilettante in many things, he was above all else a keen soldier, and was never satisfied till he had personally visited the scenes of all the great fights about which he had read and studied so much.

He was received with much hospitality and seems to have made an excellent impression on all whom he met during his stay. After staying a little over a

week at Quebec, he left for Montreal, having first posted his report in a registered packet to the Intelligence Department of the War Office.

He spent most of his time sketching, but the diary is silent as to his conclusions, and as to what he reported to the home authorities. On July 25th he returned to Montreal, where he had a short chat with Lord Dundonald (the newly appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Canadian Militia Forces) whom he had known long ago in the dash across the Bayuda desert. He had friends in New York, and needed a little change from making official (or semi-official) reports. So he took a trip to New York by the Delaware Hudson railway, which runs along the western side of Lake Champlain, and the Hudson river, the route along which an invading American force would advance.

The diary all through this visit to Canada is full of details of Wolfe's campaign. Townshend visited every point of interest in connection with these operations, both at Quebec and at Montreal, and was eager to see and get hold of any relics of the expedition. It might almost be thought that his Canadian visit was solely made for the purpose of refreshing his knowledge of Wolfe's and Townshend's operations! Very little is said on the real purpose of his journey, and he jealously kept secret all the Notes which he forwarded to Lord Lansdowne and Sir William Nicholson from time to time.

His leave was extended, and the latter days of his tour were occupied with visits to several little places along the river St. Lawrence, including Murray Bay, which he describes as "a pretty little place below Quebec on the St. Lawrence, a favourite summer resort of Americans, and having the Maison Richlieu near by, a large place with all the horrors of the tourist hotel." The last notes of any

interest concern the festivities for the Coronation of King Edward VII early in August.

While in Canada, what with the hospitality of his friends, and the work he had to do, Townshend had not much time to brood over his future, but no sooner was he in England again, at the Hounslow depôt, that he began once more to pull wires in all directions in order to achieve another change.

He sent off his various reports on Canada to Lord Lansdowne and General Nicholson. They included "Report on the Niagara Peninsula," "Political Notes on Canada," "Strategical Essay on Canada," and a "Sketch of the Military History of Canada." He was much gratified to hear from the Intelligence Department a few days later that his reports on Canada were to be printed and read to the Committee of Defence.

On leave at Champs with his wife's people, he made acquaintance with a celebrated regiment of French Infantry. This was the 31st Regiment which, returning from the manœuvres, halted at Champs. The men were billeted in the village and the officers at the Château. As usual Townshend is very free in his criticisms, and only had a good word to say for the band, which played on the terrace of the Château during dinner!

The muddled condition of the family affairs worried him a lot just then. He detested the idea of the estates—Raynham Hall and the others—being sold for the benefit of Lord Townshend, and the parasites who were living on him, and had made up his mind that he could not remain in England if this happened. Count Cahen D'Anvers, his father-in-law, was quite willing to buy the Hall at Raynham and some of the land, but did not feel disposed to give the huge sum asked for the whole estate, and Townshend writes rather bitterly about it all.



He had many difficulties to contend with in his profession. It had been a matter of common talk that Townshend did not get on at all well with General Pretyman at Bloemfontein, and it will be remembered that this was the only duty he had done in South Africa throughout the whole of the Boer War. Pretyman and his wife were great friends of Lord and Lady Roberts, and it must have gone largely against Townshend that he quarrelled, or at any rate, "did not get on" with that General. He was, on the other hand, a personal friend of Sir William Nicholson, who never lost an opportunity of doing what he could to improve the relations between him and Lord Roberts, while the latter was Commander-in-Chief.

On October 19th in Paris Townshend had a very long and confidential talk with Lord Kitchener, who was then on his way to India to take up the duties of Commander-in-Chief. Kitchener was an old friend of his, had always been most kind to him, and had thoroughly appreciated what he had done when in command of the 12th Sudanese. Among other topics, they discussed the blockhouse system in South Africa, which had been so successful in the concluding stages of the war. Kitchener said that the idea of the blockhouses came to him "one night all of a sudden." He knew that "the game of a disappearing enemy" could not go on for ever, and that he must clear whole tracks of country and keep them clear. So he started blockhouses. He was very cordial, and the result was seen later when he offered Townshend an appointment in India.

One of Townshend's rooted ideas, almost an obsession with him, was that the deeds of his ancestor George Townshend at the battle of Quebec had not been properly appreciated by historians, who were inclined to exalt Wolfe at his expense.

He was therefore very pleased to receive a letter from Mr. Doughty, the historian of Quebec, saying that an opportunity had occurred of doing something to get George Townshend the reputation due to him for the part he played there. Mr. Doughty was bringing out a guide-book to Quebec, to be called "Quebec under Two Flags," and he proposed to devote at least fifty pages to a description of the Siege of Quebec. Townshend, whose vanity was as much concerned with the doings of his family in the past as with his own, prided himself that his visit to Quebec had put the historians on the side of his ancestor.

In December Townshend took the decisive step of obtaining an interview with the Commander-in-Chief himself. Lord Roberts said he would see what could be done towards getting him a Brevet-Colonelcy "for war service," and with that Townshend would have been perfectly satisfied. But nothing came of it, and Lord Roberts afterwards said he did not remember mentioning a Brevet-Colonelcy!

For Christmas this year he went to Champs, and helped to organise a great Christmas tree for the children. He was always very popular with children of all ages and this, coupled with his great love for animals, redeems much that was frivolous in his character.

In his diary on Christmas Day, he writes:—

. . . great Christmas tree and day of toys for the children. Little Audrey is the prettiest little fairy ever seen, and all envy me on her account. . . .

All this time he had been on leave, but on January 1st he had to resume his command of the Hounslow dépôt, and took rooms in Piccadilly, so that he might at least have the consolation of the

Gaiety and Alhambra in the evening. But on January 7th he was transferred to the first Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, then serving in India.

This news cheered him considerably, and he appears to have celebrated the event on the following evening by a dinner at the Café Royal, with Gaston Foa (a very old friend of his wife's family) and others, and a party at the Apollo to follow, to see "The Girl from Kaye's." The evening was rounded off with supper at the Cecil with Grossmith, and a dance with all the actresses and chorus girls of the "Toreador," then running at the Gaiety, including "the pretty Florence Warde whom Grossmith introduced me to, and who dances the famous cake-walk with him in 'The Toreador.'" His next step was to obtain "leave until embarkation," and thus his *depôt* command ended.

Before sailing, he addressed a long letter to General Smith-Dorrien, the Adjutant-General in India, relating at length the disabilities under which he suffered with regard to his rank, pointing out that he had been a Brevet-Lieut.-Colonel for six years, but was still a junior major in his regiment, and that on arrival at Mandalay he would find himself five years the senior of his Commanding Officer! He told General Smith-Dorrien all about his interview with Lord Roberts, and how it had practically led to nothing, and he wound up by asking to be recommended to Lord Kitchener as an Assistant-Adjutant-General. By this means he hoped to avoid Mandalay, where the Battalion was then quartered. He and his wife finally embarked on the *Assaye* for India on March 6th, 1903.

## CHAPTER XV

SIX YEARS OF PEACE-TIME SOLDIERING—1903-1908

ALTHOUGH Townshend's desire to be sent to India had now materialised, he had no intention of doing mere regimental duty, if a staff appointment was to be obtained! At Aden there was a note from Smith-Dorrien, saying that Lord Kitchener had noted his name for an appointment as A.A.G., and with that he had to be content for the time, for at Bombay he found a telegram recommending him to proceed to Burma with his regiment, as there was then no vacancy on the Staff. Thus April 6th found him steaming up the Irrawaddy to Rangoon.

. . . We were at anchor in the stream at Rangoon at 9 a.m., and after two hours of monkey tricks and *chinoiserie* about plague inspections by the port doctor, the steamer was allowed to go in alongside the quay. We put up at the Strand Hotel, where we had an excellent room, but otherwise all the usual horrors of Indian hotels. Alice of course dragged me out to see the great Pagoda of Shive Dagon and other pagodas; and the Burmese, Chinese, Indian and Portuguese bazaars and quarters of the city. I like the look of the Burmans, pretty well-built girls, many of them decidedly handsome and beautifully made, with glossy black hair. The famous Shive Dagon Pagoda, which stands on a hill by itself, is covered with gold leaf, and can be seen for miles around.

They reached Mandalay on April 8th, and found neither house nor tents available, only one "awful hotel."

He was in command of the troops in Mandalay for a time, but the daily round differed in no wise from the ordinary garrison duty. He had thus plenty of opportunity of exercising his mania for voluminous writing. He began once more to worry the authorities about his claims to a staff appointment, and for this he had a sharp snub from his friend General Smith-Dorrien, who told him very sharply that there were many others with claims superior to his, that he had left India for his own good, and now had come back to "take the bread out of other people's mouths." This was plain speaking with a vengeance, but Townshend never ceased to ask for what he wanted, and to keep on asking, until at last Smith-Dorrien told him distinctly that Lord Kitchener was angry at the receipt of so many letters about himself.

Colonel Cooper, in command of his Battalion, was always very kind to Townshend, and did everything he could to meet his wishes. He applied for the command of a detachment of the Royal Fusiliers for him at Wellington, in the Neilgherry Hills, but he did not succeed in this application, and Townshend had to take up the command of a detachment of 200 men at Thayetmyo, south of Mandalay. The whole detachment was delighted to leave Mandalay.

. . . my men are of fine physique, and look very serviceable in field dress, with putties and khaki trousers cut short so as to show bare knees. We had much heavy baggage, and the men had to take their beds to Thayetmyo and worked like ants at the loading up.

*May 29.* Tied up to the east bank at Pagan, where temples cover the plain like mushrooms, some of them enormous. The Ananda temple was built in 1058, an enormous white bell-shaped pagoda. The dome is 168 feet high, with lofty

corridors inside, and colossal figures of Buddha. A massive wall of masonry surrounds it. The architecture of these places excites wonder and a feeling of awe, like the temples of Egypt. We all went up to the Ganda palm-built temple, about 1200 A.D., 180 feet high. Alice, with her Kodak, is a fanatic about temples. . . .

*June 1.* Arrived at Thayetmyo and assumed command. Very good barracks for the men. The quarters offered me, the only ones available, consisted of a tumbledown, fever-stricken hut, an N.C.O.'s bungalow, with the sun coming through the roof. I refused to occupy them, and was allowed to take up my quarters in a well-built bungalow which was the old circuit house on the river bank. For Thayetmyo is a fort in the strict sense of the word, inasmuch as the parapets flank the ditches. It is in a commanding position, the walls and ditches are in good preservation, being built, I should say, about 1853, when the British first occupied Lower Burma. . . .

Then follows minute descriptions of the features of the fort, and meticulous details of the stores, garrison, etc., and an elaborate scheme of defence in case of attack. He was lucky in having Mrs. Townshend with him at this time, for she proved a real companion, accompanying him on his shooting expeditions. She was an excellent shot, and did not hesitate to take long journeys in the jungle after game of all sorts. The monotony was occasionally relieved by visitors, though these were few and far between. Sir Hugh Barnes, Lieut.-Governor of Burma, paid them a call on July 15th, and they dined on board—a pleasant change for both. Townshend took his banjo, sang songs, and records “a most amusing evening.”

Early in November the Royal Fusiliers were

moved from Burma to Bengal. Townshend sent his wife and maid on ahead in a steamer, and sailed with the troops. Soon after his arrival in Calcutta he was made the President of the Defence Committee, appointed to draw up a scheme for distribution of troops in order to facilitate the division of the city into squares and districts in time of riots or rising. Townshend was informed that it was a three months' job, but resolved to do it if possible in one month. The truth was that he was once more restless over the news that Younghusband (an old friend of his), had been appointed to a Commission proceeding to Tibet, and he began to intrigue with a view to joining the Commission. He feared above all things to get into the rut of regimental duty, and have to go wherever the Royal Fusiliers might be sent.

At last, on January 7th, 1904, he received news of his Brevet-Colonelcy for which he had waited so long. This was followed by an interview with Lord Kitchener.

. . . he was very cheery, and asked me to sit down, saying that he was very glad to see me. He asked me if I liked my regiment, and I told him that I did, and the fellows in it; that it was one of the best in the Army, and had glorious traditions. He asked me if I was not very anxious to go on the staff, adding: "But I know you are." I told him that I was; for my position in the regiment was a very awkward one, being senior to my C.O., and that he and I were agreed about my going on the staff. I told him that I had heard from Colonel Haldane about my Brevet-Colonelcy. He congratulated me and said I was on his list for an A.A.G., which would come shortly. I told him I would sooner have the command of a regiment than be on the staff, and he promised to help me to the utmost of his power. . . .

On January 30th, he took over the duties of Acting Adjutant-General at Calcutta, while Colonel Porter was away on leave. He grumbles at the routine work, "all uninteresting, moves, cantonments, volunteers, camps, medical pensions, accounts, etc., from 7 a.m. every morning. The work is very heavy, if one does all that one should do oneself."

An occasional dinner enlivened the evenings, but the company was too heavy for Townshend's tastes, especially when he had to take in to dinner the elderly wives of local officials, or "globe-trotters" from home. His remarks on these dinners are amusing enough, and he frequently sighs for lighter companionship.

On February 14th, he was sent to Lucknow to act as A.A.G. for the Oudh District, during the absence of Colonel Reid on leave. He sent his wife (accompanied by a friend, Miss Bainbridge) up to Darjeeling till the end of March, when she would join him at Lucknow.

At Lucknow he was made very welcome, occupied Colonel Reid's house, and dined the first night of his arrival with the Gloucester Regiment, in which his ancestor, the first Marquis, had served in 1759. Lucknow was of enormous interest, if only on account of the memories of the Mutiny days.

*March 8, 1904.* Visited the Residency. Spent a most interesting time. The old residency, in ruins, stands silently among its trees and lawns much pitted and riddled with shells . . . One of the officers of the Gloucester Regiment came with me. We crossed the Mairdar Canal which was there in the Mutiny time, passed the Sikandar Bagh, where hundreds of the sepoys were bayoneted by the English soldiers inside the walled garden; past the Chatar Manzil Palace (now the club) where Sir Colin Campbell met Outram and Have-



lock. At the time of the Mutiny the Residency was surrounded by a network of houses and out-buildings belonging to it, and all these were held by the English garrison. The houses of Lucknow lapped up to all these all round at a distance of about the width of Bond Street, so an idea can be obtained of how close the fighting was. Firing went on day and night. The word "siege" does not describe it. It was continual street-fighting, mining and counter-mining. The house from which the Sudanese, "Bob the Nailer," killed so many of our people with deadly aim was only fifteen yards the other side of one of our posts—Gubbin's post, I think. Bob's house (and himself) were blown up one night by Captain Fulton of the Engineers who ran a mine under it. . . .

In the cemetery adjacent to the Residency buildings the dead lie thick. All the officers with the well-known names one has read of so often lie there, including the gallant Brigadier Neill with 300 officers, N.C.O.'s and men of his regiment (Madras Fusiliers), who were killed in action relieving Lucknow. Sir Henry Lawrence's tomb is marked: "Here lies Sir Henry Lawrence, who tried to do his duty. May the Lord have mercy on his soul." Also many names of ladies. I went down into the enormous vaulted rooms where the women and children were placed during the siege. The sight of all this moves one strangely, and one feels, even now, the sort of tigerish feeling which our soldiers felt in the campaign, when about 2,000 sepoys were bayoneted in the Sikanderbagh alone. It was getting dark when we drove out of the famous Bailey Guard Gate, still standing and in good order. . . .

On reaching home, he found a telegram from his father-in-law, Count Cahen D'Anvers, saying that

he had bought many pictures at the sale of the Raynham heirlooms, including the best. These were after his death hung at Vere Lodge, Raynham. It is a curious thing to reflect that the great Hall from which they were taken stands but a little way off, denuded of all that made it one of the show places of the country, and that all these pictures by Reynolds, Lely, Kneller, Romney and other great masters, the pride of the Townshends for generations, together with the collection of old silver and the christening cups, the gifts of kings, which were sold by public auction, have now returned to Raynham in the possession of Townshend and his descendants, who will at any rate value them. Townshend was much moved by the generosity of his father-in-law. After receiving a letter to say what silver and heirlooms he had bought, he notes in the diary:—

Considering that my father-in-law has also bought many of the pictures, including all the best, I have no reason to regret that Lord Townshend was successful in the action between him and me as to whether he had a right to sell the heirlooms. I can be glad that some of the best of the family heirlooms are not scattered to the four winds, and I am grateful to my father-in-law for having saved them. For nothing in the world would I have seen the christening cups go out of the family. . . .

The routine work of the staff at Lucknow and Naini-Tal went on throughout the year, with little of note to record, and in November Townshend had another interview with the Commander-in-Chief.

I told him that I had been up for the examination for tactical fitness, and believed that I had passed. He jokingly said that he for his part had always got out of examinations when he could.

He then told me that he was most anxious to keep me on the staff, but that there were many difficulties and few vacancies. He said that General Archie Hunter had spoken very highly of me, and that General Elliott had also praised my work. Towards the end of the interview I said it was hard to go back to the regiment as a Major. Hamilton retorted: "I don't see any grievance in that. Others have to do it." I said I had no grievance, but only asked what I was to do. It ended by Kitchener saying that he would do what he could to get me the command of a regiment. . . .

A letter from Sir Archie Hunter accounted a little for Hamilton's apparent hostility. Hunter said:—

You have evidently written too many reminders about yourself, and have somewhat wearied Lord Kitchener's staff with matters concerning yourself. But Lord Kitchener said to me that you need not write any more, that he would not forget you and that your interests were more likely to be furthered than forgotten by silence on your part. He added that he quite knew your value, but that he could not always find the billet everyone required at a minute's notice.

On December 16th Townshend embarked for England with his Battalion, his wife accompanying him. They arrived home on January 18th, and were met by the Comtesse Cahen D'Anvers, who took her daughter straight off to Paris, leaving Townshend to spend a few days in London. This he proceeded to do after his own fashion, dining every evening with old friends, and ending up at the Alhambra or Gaiety. He joined his wife in Paris on the 22nd for a few days, but on the 26th was back in London interviewing everyone he could catch with regard to a command. It was all of no avail: he finally had to

join his regiment at that dullest of all dull quarters, Parkhurst in the Isle of Wight.

In April of the following year he was on leave in Paris, having a good time. His mania for the theatre was extraordinary, and he never missed a night at one unless something official stopped the way.

One evening he went to see Réjane in "Age d'Amier" at the Gymnase, and between the acts to pay her a visit in her dressing-room.

. . . She's very nice to talk to: as an actress she is great in this piece, as she always is in everything. In this piece, all the men keep mistresses, and the author might just as well have made them married women "*du monde*," for they all behave as such. The men weep copiously on discovering their women deceive them. Réjane and her lover are weeping all through the four acts and it got on my nerves.

His leave was up on April 19th, and he had before him the rather desolating vision of commanding at the Hounslow Dépôt, a place of which he had such gloomy remembrances. But he was saved at the eleventh hour, for Sir Austin Lee of the Embassy, explained that the new Military Attaché, at Paris, Colonel Barham, was ill and had not taken up the appointment, and Townshend wanted to take up an acting position for him. As he naïvely writes: "It would be much more interesting than commanding at Hounslow!" But it was very much in the air, and could not be arranged at once, of course, so back to Hounslow he went for the remainder of April and the whole of May, though he always managed to get a lot of leave in between.

Meanwhile, in place of Colonel Barham, the King had approved of the appointment of Colonel Lowther as Military Attaché in Paris. Lowther was

away in Morocco, and someone would have to be sent to Paris to act for him meanwhile.

It took some time (as do all matters connected with the War Office), but was finally put through. On June 24th Townshend crossed over to Paris, and on July 1st he was officially appointed Acting Military Attaché at Paris and Berne. (For some reason unexplained Spain was omitted though it is generally included with France and Switzerland.)

One can well imagine how much this appointment would please Townshend. It is true that it was office work, and he always preferred a "fighting job," but being in Paris, living the most luxurious life of the most luxurious city of Europe, would make any tiresome job bearable! Jeanne Granier, the dancers of the opera, the gay "*petits soupers*," the proximity of his wife's charming home at Champs, and the comfort of the Cahen D'Anvers' house in the Ruede Basano made up a delightful combination. Then there were the approaching manœuvres, which he would of course attend officially as the representative of England! In the meantime he had to attend officially at the reception of the American deputation, which had arrived to escort the remains of Paul Jones back to the States. As Townshend truly said, Jones was nothing less than a pirate, and moreover a renegade from the British side, and there was a good deal "too much sloppy sentiment" saturating the whole proceedings. Conspicuous in the procession, in a scarlet uniform, the only official representative of England, he was much amused to hear a voice from the crowd call out, "What are the English doing among all these Republicans?" After the ceremony he had great difficulty in making his way to his carriage, and was rather embarrassed by repeated cries of "*Vive les Anglais*"—"Oh, yes"—"All right", and the like.

Early in August, Townshend heard of the marri-

age of his cousin the Marquis Townshend with the daughter of a barrister. This might have been a great disappointment, as he was the next heir to the Marquisate, but he took it very philosophically, remarking that he is not surprised, even though the Marquis had informed his father-in-law that marriage for him was "out of the question." He heard at the Embassy that Mr. Sutherst,\* the father of the bride-to-be, was well-known in certain circles in Paris, but that he was an undischarged bankrupt, so any expectations of a "dot" must have been doomed to disappointment.

He was very keen in his observations throughout the manœuvres, and his conclusions were sound enough. He notes that the chief lessons to be learned from the operations were the extraordinary marching power and morale of the French soldier, his great confidence in his officers, the wonderful method and work of the staff and the perfect artillery—recognised to be the best in Europe.

The manœuvres wound up with a "Grand military spectacle," arranged for the benefit of the public, and especially of President Loubet, who witnessed the "Battle" from his automobile.

Townshend's term as Acting Military Attaché in Paris finished on October 1st, and he promptly applied for, and obtained, two months' leave, with the understanding that at the end of it he would have to rejoin his Battalion at Parkhurst Barracks, which he did.

All this time he was still being worried by the unfortunate affairs of his cousin. He had a distinct interest in the maintenance of the family estates, and fate of the valuable heirlooms, and had already learned that Lord Townshend had begun surreptitiously to sell some of these. The marriage also

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\*Mr. Sutherst was drowned when the *Lusitania* was sunk by the Germans.

brought additional complications. These troubles do not really concern the life of General Townshend, except in so far as they might have clashed with his interests as heir presumptive. It will be sufficient to dismiss the unsavoury subject here, by noting that, after the Marquis had been declared unfit to manage his own affairs, a committee and trustees were appointed to govern the estates, to bring them back to something like order, and place them on a solvent basis for the benefit of future generations. Sir Redvers Buller undertook the ungrateful task, and ruled till his untimely and regrettable death in 1908 necessitated the appointment of another person. Owing to the firm management of the appointed trustees, the Raynham estate was saved for the holder of the title (except the pictures, and practically everything of artistic value in the house); though Stiffkey Hall and other family places had to be sacrificed, as Balls Park had been before.

On February 23rd Townshend was released from the duties of command of a company at Parkhurst, having been selected for the post of Second-in-Command of the King's (Shropshire) Light Infantry, stationed at Fyzabad, and he was told that he would be expected to join his new regiment in three weeks' time. The interval he spent partly on leave in Paris with his wife's relations.

He joined his new regiment on April 16th, and set himself to work to master all the details of his work. Mrs. Townshend went out early in June, and the two of them paid a short visit to Simla, where they saw much of Lord Kitchener who was very earnest in his advice to stick to the regiment and not try for a staff appointment at present.

In July he was appointed Acting Brigadier of the Allahabad Brigade, during the absence on leave of Brigadier-General Woolcombe. He entered on his

duties with zest and, as usual, was particularly solicitous for the comfort of the N.C.O.'s and men in his brigade. At his inspection of the quarters of the South Staffordshire Regiment, he comments with delight in the diary on the steps taken for the comfort of the rank and file of that regiment.

. . . I must say I never saw anything better done or more comfortable for the men. Their recreation and billiard rooms most comfortably furnished, many pictures, all papers, comfortable lounge, smoking-room, chairs, etc. The supper room especially smart, with little tables, beautifully clean knives, forks, etc., and excellent bill of fare. The cook-houses models of cleanliness, to which I attribute the absence of enteric fever in this Battalion. The bath-houses where men can have a swimming bath at any hour of the day also beautifully clean. Lawns have been laid down, and flower pots in plenty to brighten the look of the place, and plenty of park seats about: the place does not look like the ordinary barracks. . .

Notes like these show the interest that Townshend evinced in the well-being of the men under him. The comfort noted by him is not so rare in these days, but twenty years ago there is no doubt the men were not so well looked after as they are now, except in such battalions as this.

On October 17th, 1906, General Woolcombe returned, and Townshend handed over the Brigade, reverting to his old position as Second-in-Command of the Shropshire Light Infantry.

In July, 1907, he received a step forward, being appointed A.A.G. 9th Division, under General Sir James Wolfe Murray, K.C.B., with headquarters at Secunderabad and Ootacamund. This was a lucky step for him, for it meant employment under



one of the best and most considerate chiefs he ever had to serve with.

Such duties consisted of the usual round, and the diary contains nothing much of interest to the world at large, being a record of brigade inspections, training lectures, cavalry rides, etc., etc. All through, it shows a Townshend more content with his life and less addicted to incessant worrying of his superiors for further advancement.

On February 4th, 1908, he was gazetted substantive colonel, while he was still serving as A.A.G with the 9th Division. On the strength of this promotion he seems to have become restless again, for he wrote to Kitchener to know if there was any chance of active service for him on the North-West Frontier, where there had lately been signs of considerable unrest, and the likelihood of an expedition of some kind. But the unrest fizzled out and the frontier soon settled down again.

Early in June, 1908, Sir Redvers Buller died—a great blow to Townshend to whom he had always been such a sincere friend. It also necessitated the appointment of a successor in the management of the Raynham estates. In the previous month Lord St. Levan of St. Michaels Mount had also passed away, and the loss of these two family connections and friends was severely felt by Townshend. The Mount had always been a home to him when he had no home of his own, and “nowhere to spend Christmas by right,” as he said.

In February, 1909, it was his intention to apply for leave to go home about the May following, to see what further could be done in the matter of the estates. But on March 4th he received a telegram from the Military Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief at Calcutta, asking him if he would accept command of Orange River Colony District, which of course involved his promotion to the rank of

Brigadier-General. He wired acceptance at once, and asked if, in consideration of the fact that he had not been home for three years, he might have three months' leave in England first. This, however, was not granted; and he received orders to proceed direct from India to South Africa, *via* Zanzibar, to take up immediate charge of his District, which included, besides the Orange River Colony proper, the whole of the Harrismith District on the Natal border, and Pietermaritzburg itself.

## CHAPTER XVI

### SOUTH AFRICA AGAIN : A BRIGADE COMMAND

TOWNSHEND took over the command of the Orange River Colony Forces on May 14th, and found that his residence was the same as that occupied by General Pretzman some years before. He at once set to work with all his own particular zeal for getting things "ship-shape." At Bloemfontein itself the garrison consisted of a regiment of cavalry, two battalions of infantry, a brigade of Field Artillery, and a company of Royal Engineers. Artillery, Mounted Infantry, and Army Service Corps were stationed at Harrismith, and, at Pietermaritzburg, in the heart of Natal, the third battalion of his old regiment, the Royal Fusiliers. At Tempe in June he met a famous ex-Boer General:—

Was introduced to Christian de Wet, the Boer General, on the polo ground this afternoon, and had a long and interesting talk with him. He was both shrewd and intelligent. He said that the action of England in giving back the land after the war to its proper inhabitants had been most generous. He also said that war with Germany must come sooner or later. I was also introduced to General Hertzog, the present Minister of Education.

Townshend had been ordered to take up his command without any preliminary visit to England, but on September 19th he started on his three months' leave "on urgent private affairs," arriving on October 9th, and spending the evening at the theatre and at supper with Grossmith afterwards. The

next day he saw Sir William Nicholson at the War Office, who asked him how he liked his command. Townshend was never slow at putting in a word for what he exactly wanted, and said he liked his command fairly well but if the authorities could see fit to give him a command in the Mediterranean or at home, that was his real desire! He pointed out that he had had more than his share of foreign service, and added that the command at Cairo was his dream, but was told that it was always given to a Major-General. He crossed to France the next day to stay with his father-in-law at Champs.

Audrey met me at the Gare du Nord with her governess. . . . I was so glad to see Audrey again. She is so grown and tall, I would hardly have recognised my own daughter. She is pretty and clever; she talks like a girl of 15 or 16, and she is only eleven. We motored to Paris the next day, and dined twice at the Ritz and once at Paillard's, doing the opera and other theatres. At the opera I went behind the scenes with my father-in-law and saw Zambelli the danseuse, who remembered me from the time I was attaché.

Townshend had arranged to return by the *Kenilworth Castle* on November 27th, but suddenly resolved to go back by the steamer leaving on November 6th.

On the *Saxon* at Southampton he found a cheery company—Mr. and Mrs. Lionel Philips and their daughters, and Dr. Jameson. Early in December he went up to Johannesburg to stay with the Philips and met General Smuts, "in reality a sharp Dutch attorney of the Transvaal."

Townshend and his wife spent Christmas of 1909 at Johannesburg, where he made the acquaintance of the Governor, Lord Selborne.

He was very diplomatic in his dealings with the

chief Boers. On one occasion he paid a visit to ex-President Steyn and his wife at their farm. He found them delighted to receive him and stayed to luncheon.

I had a long talk with Steyn, who is a big man with a long brown beard. He had no strength whatever in his hands and had to have his food cut up for him. The doctors say that the loss of the use of his hands was due to poison. He takes a keen interest in politics and gives one the impression that he, after all, may be Prime Minister of the Union. Many come to see him. His brain is clear, and he seems a most able man. He asks me about Basutoland, and how many men would be wanted in case of a rising. He said it was a question to be solved, but that England was sure to say that the "Boer was beating the poor black again!". . . .

The death of King Edward VII on May 6th produced a profound sensation throughout South Africa, and Townshend as Administrator of the Orange River Colony on the occasion of the memorial service on May 20th, addressed the following telegram to Lord Crewe:—

It is difficult to describe the deep loyalty and devotion manifested by all classes of the Orange River Colony population, represented by the great crowd assembled at Bloemfontein, together with all the troops in garrison, for the strikingly impressive memorial service to our late King to-day. Clergy of all denominations united in conducting the service, and have asked me to convey an expression of sympathy and loyalty to our King from the hearts of all gathered here that day. I would beg leave to indicate to your Lordship the significance of such a loyal gathering of this Colony.—Townshend.

Early in June Townshend ceased to be Administrator of the Orange River Colony; Dr. Ramsbottom, the Colonial Treasurer, being appointed by the new Union Government in his stead.

A great scheme in manœuvres had been planned for this year, and as usual he entered with zest into this purely military side of his duties. The scheme was carried out with the greatest success. On August 7th, Lord Methuen and his staff attended the church parade of the troops. He told Townshend afterwards how pleased he was with the conduct of the manœuvres, praising him for all the dispositions taken and the satisfactory results obtained. His next move was a staff ride into Natal, to Ladysmith, Spion Kop, Colenso, Ingogo, Laing's Nek and Majuba—thus including the principal scenes of Buller's operations in the Boer War. After this he had to begin at once to rehearse Ceremonial Parades in the garrison, in view of the approaching visit of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught to open the first session of the new Union Parliament. This was to include a review of all the troops under his command upon the polo ground of the Garrison Club. The elections intervened, and great was the excitement in Pretoria when General Botha was defeated by the representative of the Britishers in the Transvaal—Sir Percy Fitzpatrick. All the Unionist leaders got in, and three cabinet ministers (Botha, Hull and Moor) were unseated. Townshend notes: "It was a regular smack in the eye for the Boers!"

After the staff ride, Townshend stayed with Lord Methuen for a day, and was greatly cheered by his approval.

He said he thought I should be promoted very soon now, that he would be sorry to lose me and so would everyone, as no one could be more popular with the troops than I was. I understood that

he had been cracking me up to the War Office over the manoeuvres. . . .

In the last week of October, 1910, Townshend went to Cape Town for the arrival of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught in the *Balmoral Castle*. There was a review at Green Point, mostly volunteers and schoolboy cadets in plain clothes.

. . . Lord Gladstone most ill at ease on a horse, in a most theatrical-looking blue and silver diplomatic uniform. Much anxiety was caused as his horse took him about just as he liked and would have thrown him for tuppence! When a train passed with a noise, all thought he was off! "If another train comes along he's done for," whispered a member of his staff. The gods were kind. No other train came along. Lord Gladstone mounted in uniform with a sword gives no more appearance of authority than he does in a frock coat and a tall hat! He is conspicuously unpopular with the crowd.

The Review at Bloemfontein was a great success—great credit being given to Townshend for all the arrangements. The Duchess remembered him from the time when they had met in India in 1888—over twenty years before.

The Mayor, for his Royal Garden Party, had put a notice in the papers that all might come. So all sorts and conditions of people filed past the Royal party; some with a nod; some without even a nod, and some with a "I'm as good as you" sort of look.

Townshend was given the Union Medal which he did not care about, as he said it broke the record of

his war medals. He declared to Lord Lansdowne in a long letter, that it ought to have been given to his wife instead, for when he was Acting Governor of the Colony she had entertained and brought together the English and the Dutch alike. So much so that the ex-President Steyn and his wife had called on them, a thing he had never done in any other Administration, not even that of Goold-Adams, so she ought to have had the medal, which was given to Lady Gladstone, and also to the wife of the Mayor of Bloemfontein!

On March 26th he left for Cape Town *en route* for England on short leave. Mrs. Townshend remained behind at Bloemfontein.

In Paris he made the personal acquaintance of Commandant Mardacq, whose book he had just translated into English. They had much in common, and especially agreed on the study of strategy as being of the first importance. Mardacq said that the French looked for their leaders in the next war (he little knew it was to come in three years!) among the younger men. Very few of the older generals knew anything about strategy. He also thought that in the event of an English Army co-operating with a French group of armies, it would be wise to contemplate disembarkation in France, say at Calais, whence it could concentrate on the left of the French group of armies by French railways in the N.E. corner of France. The French, English and Belgian armies should act unitedly. Mardacq wanted Townshend to meet a "certain General Foch," the Commandant of the Ecole de Guerre, who was shortly to command a division. Foch had heard much about Townshend's keenness and wanted to meet him in turn, especially to talk over his idea of interchanging French and English staff officers for the mutual assimilation of ideas.

On May 4th they met and had a long talk. Foch



had been reading Colonel A. Court Repington's letters in *The Times* on "The Tendencies of the German Army,"—and he was also of opinion that in the event of war the right wing of the German Army would be based on the line Cologne-Coblenz, and, concentrating at Malmédy, would move westward into Belgium, *via* Liège, thence by Namur and into France *via* the Meuse.

General Foch asked me if I knew how many army corps the Germans will put into line. He said there would be 37 army corps at 10 kilometre distance! He showed me on the map how the Germans have got a camp at Malmédy, near Aix la Chapelle, and they have three railways (double lines) by which seven army corps could concentrate at Malmédy in four days. He said they had great stores of munitions magazined at Malmédy, and some two hundred automobiles. Such a group of armies on such a front can only be called invasion, said Foch; and does anyone imagine for a moment that the Germans would ever leave Belgium again, once they entered it? Did England contemplate the annexation of Belgium and the sea-board with equanimity? It was a case where England, France and Belgium must fight together for existence. He said, "we do not want to conquer: we want to live and it is time everyone understood this."

Townshend had hoped his promotion would go through in time to obviate the necessity of returning to South Africa, but it was not to be. On May 31st he one more set sail from Southampton on the *Edinburgh Castle*, arriving at Cape Town on June 20th and Bloemfontein three days later. He sat down to work as usual, but it was only for a short time, for on July 21st he was at last promoted to

Major-General. Telegrams of congratulation flowed in from all sides. Everyone was genuinely glad of his advancement, and on September 20th, Townshend, his wife, and the faithful Whitmore\* embarked on the *Briton* leaving South Africa for the last time.

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\* His soldier-servant for many years

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE COMING OF THE GREAT WAR

TOWNSHEND reached home again on October 7th, 1911, and shortly afterwards received an offer from the War Office of the command of the Home Counties Division of the Territorial Force. The pay was good and the acceptance of it would enable him to stay in England for a time and look after his home interests. But it was not at all what he wanted. He thought that his long service abroad entitled him to the command of a Regular Division. Indeed, his first idea was to refuse the offer, but all his friends among the highest military authorities warned him that if he refused this, he might easily be passed over for better posts when opportunities arose. Mr. Haldane, Secretary for War, whose pet idea was the development of the Territorial Force, had practically laid down a rule that General Officers on promotion should, whenever possible, first command a Territorial Division. It was also pointed out to him that it would be madness to refuse for another reason, *viz.*, that other candidates for promotion had been passed over for him. He could never again complain that he himself had been passed over, if he were now to refuse an appointment offered him over the heads of others. So, much against his will and with many misgivings that he was not doing the best for himself, he accepted the offer of the post which was not to be vacant till April, 1912. In the meantime he went over to France, and accompanied his friend the Prince of Monaco on a short visit to Corsica, ostensibly to shoot moun-

flon, though undoubtedly the chief interest of his visit centred round the birthplace and cradle of the Emperor Napoleon.

He settled down and put all his heart into the work of training his Division. And perhaps he succeeded better than many other Generals would have done, for he had the knack of making his men respect, and even love him. To fill up his time, he wrote articles for the military papers.

He was in constant touch with Mardacq, the French Colonel whose excellent book on Strategy he had translated for English readers. Mardacq, like himself, believed that a continental war was imminent, and that Germany had been working to this end for many years. Townshend in the following letter gave full rein to his sentiments on the subject:

14 Hill Street, Berkeley Square.  
July 27th, 1912.

My dear Mardacq,

You will have perhaps wondered why I have not written, but if you had to train a Division of some 18,000 territorial troops, comprised of three brigades in the areas of Kent, Surrey and Middlesex, with some scattered detachments in Sussex, and get in four hours' study of strategy and *haute tactique* daily, you would well understand why I have not written.

I wonder if I can go with General Foch and his Division to the manœuvres? Could I be useful to you in this way? I must come and see General Foch at Chaumont before the manœuvres begin. I was very angry the other day when I went to the War Office, and was told I had applied too late to be granted one of the passes to the French manœuvres. I suppose a lot of junior officers who do not know French, and have no real sympathy with France, and who do not know some of her leading

soldiers as I do, have been selected to go. I want to write a good account of the French Grand Manœuvres from a *haute tactique* point of view. I think Brigadier-General Wilson had a good deal to do with who should go from the British Service, and as I am much senior to him I do not suppose he was over anxious for me to go. . . .

In August, he was invited by General Grierson, of the Eastern Command, to officiate as umpire-in-chief at the manœuvres of the Fourth Division at Aldershot. On September 25th, he was transferred to the command of the East Anglian Division, greatly to his delight, as he felt himself to be among his own people. Many pages of the diary are taken up with accounts of the training he set on foot, and the manœuvres he organised in his new command.

One of his first acts was to inspect Vere Lodge, situated almost at the gates of Raynham Hall, with a view to purchase. As he said: "In the language of strategy, I shall make Vere Lodge my first objective and Raynham Hall my principal objective." He always had a secret hope of owning the Hall one day. Vere Lodge was a comfortable squire's house, built by Lord Charles Townshend early in the nineteenth century, when the Hall was let to a French *émigré*. It had cost £18,000 to build, and was in every way adapted to Townshend's immediate requirements, though he intended to spend another seven or eight thousand on it to make room for the pictures bought at the sale of the Townshend furniture in 1904, and to add bathrooms, electric light and other modern improvements necessary to bring it up-to-date.

At this time Townshend was closely in touch with Foch, who always liked and admired him. Foch's opinion of British Infantry expressed in a letter to Townshend is worth noting. The great French General said:—

*L'infanterie anglaise s'est montrée excellente. Il n'y en a pas de meilleure. Au combat, surtout, elle est d'une vivacité peu ordinaire, très bien stylée. Je suis convaincu qu'elle porterait des coups sérieux.*

Townshend put forward the idea that, for his command, considering all the difficulties in the way of proper training, the better course would be to arrange local camps in local centres, as giving the best value for time and money. But by January, 1913, he had to confess himself defeated in these plans by the apathy and want of patriotism of the public of East Anglia. He, therefore, abandoned the scheme of combined training which he had been able to carry out with the Territorial Force of the Home Counties. The members of the Force themselves were principally to blame in the matter, as their one idea seemed to be to train on the esplanade of some seaside resort! He writes:—

I could have trained them at Thetford, but am given to understand that the want of amusement (cinemas, theatres, etc.) in that locality caused it to be so unpopular with the Territorials when General Byng trained there before, that it lessened the number of recruits. Lots of them would leave. Everyone, in short, seemed to be in collusion to arrange for a "good time" when out for training!

He never lost interest in the past history of his family, and traced another portrait of the Raynham collection, which had not been up for sale with the rest in 1904, and had evidently been stolen and sent out of the country. Colonel Sam Hughes, the Minister of Militia and Defence at Ottawa, had had this picture sent to him by someone. It was the portrait by Copley, R.A., of the first Marquis Townshend. That was by no means the only theft

from the Hall; many of the heirlooms, both pictures and valuable china had mysteriously disappeared prior to the great sale. Some of the china sold by the thief turned up at an antique dealer's shop in Cromer and had to be bought back by members of the family! Many pieces and valuable paintings had disappeared altogether, and would never be traced again. Townshend had his suspicions and employed detectives, but was not able to trace the articles or prove anything against the suspected persons. Still, as a matter of precaution, he had refused Sir Redvers Buller's request to allow the portraits bought by his father-in-law for his wife and himself, to remain at the Hall, being quite convinced that they would have also disappeared!

Meanwhile, he told Sir W. Frankleyn at the War Office that he would accept a command in India, if offered, to get away from the Territorials.

The post offered him was the Command of the Jhansi Brigade, and he embarked to take up his duties on June 6th, 1913. His servant Whitmore, who had been with him years before in the Royal Fusiliers, was still in his service, and went with him wherever he had to go, till he contracted the illness which killed him, after years of faithful service, in the swamps of Mesopotamia.

On June 30th, 1913, Townshend took over the command of the Jhansi mixed Brigade, consisting of a Battalion of the Berkshire Regiment, and two or three Indian regiments at Jhansi, in addition to detachments in outlying stations at Goonah, Nowgang and in Bhopal.

As usual, his first proceeding was to draw up a comprehensive course of training for the Brigade, and he instituted a Local Camp of Exercise at Babina, fifteen miles away. Intensive tactical training, staff tours, and schemes for operations against tribesmen were set on foot immediately. An extract

from his diary will show how thoroughly he entered on the duties of a new command, and how well he understood what was required.

Although certain periods are set apart for squadron, battery and company work, I propose to hold occasionally a tactical exercise of the three armies in the field in order to supplement the training of Field Officers imparted in tactical exercises on the map. It is quite easy to arrange for three days without interfering with the serious work done by individual units under the Training Programme, care being taken that such garrison manœuvre days should not take place more than once a fortnight. In order to complete thoroughly the training at the camp of exercise, units will be placed at the disposal of their commanding officers after the dislocation of the troops at the camp on November 21st to complete the regimental or battalion training. I shall invite them to utilise the schemes given at the previously held camp of exercise for all instructional exercises. Such a method possesses many advantages: it gives ready-made instruction on tactical schemes for which comments and written instructions by the G.O.C. are in print; it does away with the labour of time and trouble in preparing schemes, and the lessons of the camp of exercise and manœuvres are kept fresh in the memory.

He also issued orders that selected N.C.O.'s would be allowed to attend the evening conferences of officers at the camp of exercise, recognising that, under modern conditions, the role of the N.C.O. is of far higher importance than formerly. For to him generally fell the task of leading forward the young soldier under the violence of modern gun and rifle fire. He also thought that on manœuvres the N.C.O.



should occasionally be entrusted with the command of a company.

In July he received a snub from Sir Percy Lake on the General Staff at Simla, with reference to a circular issued to his Brigade.

DEAR TOWNSHEND,

General Peyton has shown me a circular entitled the "Necessity of a Doctrine," recently issued to your Brigade. In private life there is every scope for "*Tot homines tot sententiæ*"; but when in soldiering, you substitute "*duces*" for "*homines*," there is every objection, and his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief has expressed his views on this subject very fully in the Memorandum on Army Training in India 1911-12, and later in his speech at the Inter-Divisional Manœuvres in December last. Owing to your only lately having arrived in India, you may not have had an opportunity of reading His Excellency's speeches, so I am enclosing a copy. I feel sure that you will thoroughly agree with H. E.'s remarks as to "adherence to regulations," with which the second speech concludes. I know that H. E. has strong objections to officers in command issuing training memoranda of their own, and so I am sending you this note privately.

Yours sincerely,

PERCY LAKE.

Townshend answered the letter to the satisfaction of H.Q., and complained at the same time of the wretchedly small grant for training purposes. He also seems to have "let himself go" on other matters; for Lake says in his reply, "Your account of the Territorial Force is interesting—and depressing!"

The manœuvres were successful, and Townshend was highly complimented by Sir John Nixon (com-

manding the Southern Army) on the result of his training.

It was said that the Lahore Army Exercise Operations were both many and varied! A march on Kabul *via* the Kyber Pass, by an army: invasion of Tirah by an army of two or three divisions: and, at the end, the Commander-in-Chief (Sir Beauchamp Duff) thought it would never do for the Amir to hear of this famous exercise, so ordered it to be changed into an Invasion of Abyssinia (and then atrophy set in).

Having made a great success of the manoeuvres, Townshend now sat down to much letter-writing to cajole the command of a Division for himself. He said he had heard from Sir John French that he was under the impression he was commanding a Division in India, and that he should not have accepted only a Brigade.

In December, perhaps having very little to do just then, he despatched a very long circular letter to Kitchener, Lansdowne, Curzon, Walter Long,\* Sir George Armstrong, Sir John French, Sir John Nixon, Sir James Grierson and others, which was more of an essay or a lecture than a letter. He called it "Wanted, a Doctrine *Re* Politics and Strategy in the Afghan Question of 1913." He dealt principally with the question of Afghanistan and possible complications in that quarter, but he took the opportunity of contrasting in the most vivid manner the attitudes of Germany and England with regard to their preparedness for war.

His friends were good to him. Sir John Nixon wrote to say he had recommended him for a Division, and he immediately wrote to Kitchener, French, Sir John Frankleyn and others to tell them so! One of his most intimate friends at that time

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\* Afterwards Lord Long.

was General Sir James Willcocks, commanding the Northern Army in India. A letter from this whole-hearted soldier, dated December 23rd, 1913, is worth quoting in full:—

DEAR TOWNSHEND,

Thanks for yours of 7th inst. I am in Agra for a week, after nine weeks' travelling, during which I have had five staff tours and seventeen field days. It is a strenuous but glorious life and I simply live with my beloved soldiers. I wonder if I shall ever serve with them again in the field. Of all life's joys none equal the feeling of being in command against the King's enemies. I never ask for war, but, being human, I like it when it comes. I am very glad Nixon was pleased with your Brigade. I was sure he would be, for you are a keen soldier and do your duty. I met one of your C.O.'s the other day, and he was loud in praise of your lectures, and said he had learned a lot from them. French is our best soldier, and would, I am sure, do well in war. I like his looks. It goes a long way on service. Repington talked vaguely of coming out to India, but men in his billet find it difficult to get away for long, and I am sure he has no intention of coming out really. . . . I go in October, and have no idea of what I shall do then—perhaps go and help the Turks if they will have me!

A happy 1914 to you. Yours sincerely,

JAMES WILLCOCKS.

In February, he was offered the command of the Rawal Pindi Brigade in the 2nd Division, commanded by General Sir G. Kitson. The Military Secretary hinted that he would not have a very easy task as the General was reported to be in very bad health, and therefore irritable and querulous, and it was said (as Townshend puts it in his diary) that "Lady Kitson does not appear to be very popular

with the Indian Army officers, as there is too much of 'none but Rifles need apply', and that sort of thing!" He accepted the offer of the Brigade at once, seeing in the report of General Kitson's ill-health a chance for him to get command of the Division very soon.

He took up the command of his new Brigade at Rawal Pindi early in April, and met Sir Beauchamp Duff, the new C.-in-C. in India, who was very glad to see him again. He got to like the idea of being there for a time, as it brought back many pleasant reminiscences of the past.

. . . The country here is well wooded, pretty and green. The Murree hills and the snow-capped Himalayas look wonderfully close. What reminiscences they bring back to me! My return from Chitral through Kashmir and Murree, and to Pindi on my way home nineteen years ago! But how long ago it seems! . . .

Events now followed each other in rapid succession, leading up to the final crash on August 4th. Thinking that England would perhaps be dragged into the mess, Townshend wired to Sir John French, begging him to take him if there were war, and wired to his wife to ask Kitchener the same favour. To the latter, his wife replied: "Implored French, but little hope."

From the date of the Declaration of War by England, Townshend kept up a bombardment of telegrams to every conceivable person whom he thought might help him to get to the front. It was no use for his wife to wire: "Keep quiet no hurry doing utmost." He would not keep quiet. He kept on telegraphing: "Unless Lord Kitchener transfers me home I look upon my career as finished." To Lord Nicholson he wired, "I implore your influence, transfer home, any appointment." To the Military Secretary at the War Office he telegraphed: "*Re*

We must all be cheery and do our duty. I am perfectly convinced that we shall all go to this great war where all men are wanted to defend the Empire. I am certain you will go and shall make it my business to inform Lord Kitchener and the Chief in India that your battalion has close on eleven years in the country and four years in frontier stations, and so have good reasons for looking upon going to the war as a right. . . .

Yet there is no doubt Townshend was being kept out in India for a very definite purpose and he was able to recognise this in later and calmer years. The tribes on the North-West Frontier, especially the Mahsuds, were in a most unsettled state. The news of the Great War and the successive defeats which the Germans had inflicted on the troops of the Allies was the talk of the bazaars and had spread over the Border. To many of the disaffected tribes, this seemed to be the opportune moment for a rebellion against the British rule. Townshend's former great experience in dealing with frontier troubles marked him down as the very man in case of emergency. He suggested that, in view of the concentration of British troops on the frontier, it would be a good thing to "demonstrate" strongly in that direction, and show the discontented tribes that England was not to be defied with impunity, even if she were deeply engaged on the other side of the world. Donald, the Chief Commissioner of the North-West Provinces, agreed. There were three Generals mixed up in this "demonstration."

Eventually, chiefly on account of the demonstrations in force, and what Townshend calls his "*promenades militaires*," the tribal disorders died down, the tribesmen apparently thinking that it would be hopeless to carry out successfully any attack on the British. There was a sharp combat with a "lash-

kar" of about 15,000 men who were defeated with great loss by 300 local militia, and that was the end of the frontier troubles. Various false reports were constantly being spread as to future dangers, but by January 15th it was all over, and the 4th Brigade under Townshend returned to Rawal Pindi.

On February 19th, there was a genuine fear in Rawal Pindi of an organised native rising, the General commanding having received a cypher telegram from the Governor of the Punjab to that effect. Precautions were taken as for another Mutiny. The British troops were concentrated: an extra hundred rifles were added to the Arsenal guard; and a special picquet placed on the Club to guard the women and children gathered there. Indeed, the Commanding Officer of the 35th Sikhs took a serious view of the matter. He said his men were surly, discontented and semi-insolent in their manner. There appeared to be no doubt that a rising was expected among the Sikhs. The night, however, passed quietly, and the British picquets were withdrawn at daylight.

On the 22nd, Townshend had an interview with the native officers of the 35th Sikhs, and bluffed them successfully with one of his usual talks:

I told them that the precautions taken were not directed against any regiment in particular. I spoke of my connection with the 14th Sikhs in the defence of Chitral Fort, and how I had always loved the Sikh soldier. I said there were undoubtedly plots against the Government with which we would deal with a heavy hand, and that the plotters were "budmashes." I told the men that seven or eight of these conspirators had been arrested at Lahore, with papers and other information which said that a new flag was going to be the flag of India, at which I laughed. I know

that my badinage had a good effect when I afterwards inspected the battalion. . . .

Townshend was very disgusted to hear from Sir John Nixon that he had heard that there had been a panic among the ladies at Pindi. He told the General that there had been no panic, but that Pindi was supreme in all garrisons east of Suez for venomous lower middle-class gossip, and that the precautions taken were only what was necessary after the alarmist telegram from the Governor of the Punjab—"A Trafalgar-Bay-like wire," as he called it.

The unrest among the Sikhs was not a solitary case. Townshend notes that about the same time there were reports of seditious meetings of the 5th Light Infantry at Singapore, when some twenty or more European civilians were killed and the garrison gunners lost severely. The fighting continued for two or three days after which the rioters were hunted down. Also he mentions a rising of the 130th Native Infantry at Rangoon, where many of the regiment were sentenced to heavy terms of imprisonment, and two were shot. And there was grave disaffection among the 12th Pioneers at Quetta.

During these days of rumours of unrest and stories of plots in native regiments, Townshend entertained a good deal and gave parties and a café chantant instead of a dance, and all Pindi was delighted. When he thought there was any special danger to be feared, he always tried to make everyone cheery and gay, when in reality he was taking the most stringent precautions. He never lost his head, or let the natives think he distrusted them. When the 35th Sikhs were suspected, he at once had a guard of that regiment placed over his own quarters at night. It was a bold move, but he wished to show all the garrison that they were being trusted. In point of fact, as he wrote in his diary: "I did

not trust them one little bit, but by putting my life in their hands I bluffed them, and established confidence all round."

On March 19th, Sir John Nixon was appointed to command an expedition to the Persian Gulf for advance through Mesopotamia and he asked for Townshend as special service officer.

The renewed chance of getting to the Front raised his spirits. What a temperamental nature this was: buoyant one minute and down in the depths the next! And a temperament above all easily moved by women. Now, while waiting anxiously for news of his release from suspense, he turned for consolation to the society of the ladies of the garrison.

. . . Took Mrs. C. and Mrs. W. for a run in the car along the Jhelum road, and forgot for a time that I am in this prison—India. When I said to them that they were the only friends in India that I felt were friends, they both laughed, and said I should say the same thing to the next ladies I was with! They little knew how much I meant it. I also include Sir John and Lady Nixon. The latter told me last night at the club that she was determined I should go with her husband, who has confidence and trust in my judgment and knowledge of war. I replied that I would either succeed or never come back! As I walked back to the club I thought it all over, the touching words and friendship of Lady Nixon, who trusts me, and the grace and beauty of Mrs. W., whom I delight to be able to talk to and see, and who tells me more unpleasant home truths and blows to my vanity than I have ever had in my life. I also thought of Alice, whose love I began to see I had neglected for so long. And after dining alone, I went to my quarters and worked till one in the morning, When I went to bed, I prayed as I have never



prayed before to God to let me go now and if necessary give my life for my country. For if so, my record in the end would not be so bad. Such a death washes out much in the past, as poor Scobell wrote to me before he died. I believe I can say I fear no responsibility, and have confidence in my own knowledge and judgment, and I pray God my chance may come now.

His prayer was answered. On April 12th, the following telegram reached him from the Commander-in-Chief at Simla:—

I have selected you for command of one of the Divisions now in force. Order will follow.

This was followed two days later by a further telegram ordering him to join the 6th Division in Mesopotamia, by boat leaving Karachi on the 17th.

He wired the good news home to Raynham, and the answer flashed back—"Overjoyed love from Alice and Audrey." His final act at Pindi was to issue an order to the troops in garrison in which he thanked them all "for their fine soldierly conduct and discipline in a most trying time." He loved his men and was grateful for their support, and they loved him too as few Commanders have been loved.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### MESOPOTAMIA: THE ADVANCE TO AMARAH

A LETTER from Gunner Grant describes the scenes of enthusiasm which marked General Townshend's farewell to his command.

The day before our General left Rawal Pindi he gave a farewell speech to us in the garrison theatre. It was packed to suffocation. His words were:—"Well, comrades, to-morrow I leave you: I go to Mesopotamia." There was a great silence in that great gathering of his soldiers. He asked why we were silent. One old soldier said: "We want to comewith you." Cheer upon cheer greeted this remark. They shouted. They cried out. Our gallant General saluted us and said:—"I tried hard to take you to France, and now I have received orders to go to Mesopotamia. I wish I could take you with me but I cannot do so. Perhaps we may meet again. Good-bye, my men, good-bye!"

Gunner Grant was afterwards detailed for Mesopotamia. Many offers of ten pounds and over were offered him for his chance, so eager were the men to join up with Townshend, but he would not miss his opportunity. He tells of the embarkation scenes:

. . . The whole Brigade turned out to wish us farewell. Some of the boys in their excitement even kissed me good-bye (I think they were drunk). Crowds of them marched with us to the

station. . . . On the steamer was "Our Charlie" as Sir Charles Townshend was always known to his troops, and in a short time I was having a chat with him. It was a very frequent thing to see "our General" laughing and talking with a private. That is one of the reasons every man worshipped him. . . .

Rumours as usual were rife. It was said that a force of 100,000 men were being gathered at Basra to take Mesopotamia. Townshend hoped for this, and recalled how in the time of the Roman Emperor Justinian, Mesopotamia was one of the richest wheat growing countries in the world, abounding with canals, barges and reservoirs, until the Persians invaded it, put it to fire and sword, and destroyed its wealth. He recalled how Hanotaux, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs in France, had prophesied as long ago as 1911 that history would repeat itself, that the Italians would regain North Africa, and that there would one day be large armies fighting where Belisarius fought on the plains of Mesopotamia. Hanotaux's words had come true. The Italians had regained Tripoli, and we were fighting in Egypt and Mesopotamia, where Belisarius had fought before.

The troops now being sent to the head of the Persian Gulf were not the first to arrive since the beginning of the war. Early in October, 1914, an infantry brigade of the 6th (Poona) Division had been secretly despatched from Bombay under Brigadier-General Delamain to demonstrate at the head of the Gulf, occupy Abadan Island to protect the oil-works, and if possible, also occupy Basra. When war was declared against Turkey on November 5th, the remainder of the 6th Division, under Sir Arthur Barrett, left Bombay and joined up with the Infantry Brigade already sent and stationed on the

pearl-fishing island of Bahrein. This brought the strength of the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force (officially known as Indian Expeditionary Force "D") to about 15,000 men. General Barrett arrived at Fao at the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab (the river which is formed by the uniting of the Tigris and the Euphrates) on November 14th. His objective was Basra (the ancient Bassorah of Sinbad the Sailor) further up the river. Townshend severely criticizes the folly of sending an army to land in a hostile country without the means of going inland more than a few miles from the coast. The same thing had been done in the Peninsular War when Wellesley landed at Mondego Bay without transport and under-proportioned in artillery. Wolfe at Quebec had no transport either; but he had had lighters and flat-bottomed boats in which to land his troops. The British reached Fao without even those! The arrival of Barrett and his force, such as it was, caused the Turks to fall back on Basra, and the landing was unopposed. This was lucky, for with nothing in the shape of flat-bottomed or collapsible boats or barges, in which to land men and supplies, the disembarkation of the divisions was a ticklish and tedious business. Several men were drowned in the process and to top all, the ammunition for the artillery was so short that the guns could hardly be used at all. The management of the whole of this preliminary affair was a forecast of the way in which the Mesopotamian Expedition was to be "supported" throughout.

On November 22nd, the British entered Basra unopposed, after a night march. They had had the luck to meet with a number of river craft whose skippers had managed to evade the Turks and keep concealed on the declaration of war. By this wind-fall of transport (for it was nothing less), Barrett managed to occupy Kurna, an important post at the

bifurcation of the Tigris and Euphrates—thirty-five miles from Basra. Some fighting followed. Early in December, some of the Turks retreated and 12,000 men and nine guns surrendered to General Fry, who proceeded to entrench on the right bank of the Tigris about a mile from Kurna. A series of "reconnaissances in force" (but apparently without any definite plan) were carried out in January by General Dobbie, the British falling back in each case. These were subsequently telegraphed to Constantinople as "defeats of the British." Such advances and retreats encouraged the Turks to increase their activity, and create a more formidable position north of Kurna. More serious fighting followed. A large force of Turks assembled at Nasiriyeh, to attack Basra from the north-west by the desert route: so General Barrett threw up an entrenched camp at Shaiba along the road by which they might approach. This was the position at the beginning of April. General Sir John Nixon was in supreme command of the whole force, amounting to two divisions.

Meanwhile General Sir Arthur Barrett was compelled to resign command of the Division through ill-health, and was succeeded by Townshend. But before the latter could reach Mesopotamia, the battle of Shaiba had been fought. A very hotly contested fight it was, ending in the defeat of the Turks, who had 3,000 killed and 800 prisoners. They retreated to Nasiriyeh, where the Commander, Suleiman Askeri, committed suicide. The British losses were also severe, about 1,000 killed and wounded, including 18 officers killed and 42 wounded.

On arrival at Basra, General Nixon informed Townshend at once that he had been selected to take command of the advance from Kurna to Amarah, which was the furthest point to which it

had been as yet decided to advance. So he settled himself down in the house of one Antipas, and arranged for a preliminary trip up to Kurna to "spy out the land." There was not much land to spy! The flood season was in full swing, and the river had overflowed its banks for miles. Nothing but water—water everywhere, with occasional little oases of palm trees, and now and then mud-built Arab villages on rising ground looking like forlorn isles in an ocean. Townshend saw at once that the only means of advance would be by boats, for during the floods the banks of the Tigris are invariably under water, and no marching, or movement of wheeled traffic is possible over large tracts of country.

The Turkish main line of resistance was at a point called Bahran, where there was a ring of sand hills, a small village of mud huts and a redoubt or two with guns—all about six miles away. Bahran was supported by two other entrenchments known as the Rotah and Maziblah positions. The river was strewn with mines, and the whole Turkish force of about six battalions, ten guns, 600 Arab riflemen, a gunboat (the *Marmarice*) and about 1,200 marsh Arabs armed with rifles were installed among the marshes and thick weeds on the west flank of the British forces. The sea of deep floods and the impassable marshes rendered a turning movement impossible, and a frontal attack was the only means of destroying the enemy's positions. As Townshend puts it:

Here was an example of the difference between theory and practice. Under ordinary circumstances nothing would induce me to make a frontal attack with the whole of my force, and here was I, in my first command as a General on active service, not only condemned to such an

attack, but my infantry must advance to the attack in boats or be drowned: and the mines had to be fished up as well.

The odds seemed all in favour of the Turks, but mainly owing to a want of resolution on the part of the Turkish Commander the battle was eventually won by the British. Townshend naturally wished to concentrate his division for the attack, but to his dismay he discovered that he was expected to find, from the troops in that division, not only the men for lines of communication, but also a whole brigade (the 18th) for garrisoning a fort which covered Basra from the south-west. Moreover, all the Headquarters Staff at Basra, all the military police in Basra; and even the servants of the staff officers, were taken from the combatants of his division. Thus for his fight at Kurna, he was to have only two brigades out of the three allotted to him, and these were to be depleted in every possible way.

Then came the question of the boats. These were known as "bellums," and ancient drawings of them have been found on rocks in Mesopotamia. They are small but rather heavy country flat-bottomed vessels, ranging from 30 to 40 feet in length, armoured by machine-gun shields fixed on their bows. Three hundred and twenty of these boats were required for each Brigade. Before boats, however, came the question of mines. Townshend cunningly offered four hundred rupees for every mine fished up in the river, and the consequence was that hundreds of Arabs who might have been harassing us on the side of the Turks, spent their days hunting for Turkish mines!

Early in May the preparations were considered to be sufficiently advanced, and definite orders were issued by Sir John Nixon to drive the enemy from his positions to the north of Kurna and push on to

occupy Amarah, the most important town south of Baghdad, 87 miles from Kurna, with magazines, stores, and a garrison. The operations were to be continuous. The leading feature of the coming fight was that the infantry had to advance in these bellums, each of which contained a crew of one N.C.O. and nine men, and were punted along the swamps and marshes and shallows in much the same way as an ordinary punt is propelled on the Thames. Training in punting bellums had been carried on for some time previously, 126 men per battalion being calculated for the whole fleet, and by May 28th, a full dress rehearsal, which came to be known as "Townshend's Regatta" took place, and the whole brigade manœuvred in bellums! Each battalion had one quarter of its boats armoured and three quarters unarmoured, and besides these there were the machine guns and also a mountain battery on specially constructed armoured rafts, and the field ambulance on light unarmoured rafts. All these craft were provided with bamboo punt poles, and with auxiliary paddles for those of the crew who had not been instructed in poling the bellums. For a pole was the best possible means of getting through the shallow and reed-grown (but sound-bottomed) field of battle. The punters were of course not all turned out as trained watermen, but they were good enough to permit of the brigade deploying from line of march into line of quarter column and advancing to the attack in line of companies.

It should be noted that, in addition to the infantry advancing in bellums, Townshend was supported by a naval flotilla, consisting of three sloops (*Espiègle*, *Clio*, and *Odin*), four armed launches, *i.e.*, small tug-boats with armoured shields, and two naval horse-boats carrying 4.7 guns. In the diary he writes:—



On the afternoon of May 30th, I climbed the observation tower and had another look at the position I was to attack. Everything was ready for the morrow. I looked over the tops of the palm trees to the north and saw a great sea with small yellow islands here and there, which were the redoubts occupied by the Turks. . . . I still felt disturbed by my inability to make any turning movement: my attack had of necessity to be purely frontal and so was ripe for defeat. . . . Moreover, no one felt exactly comfortable about the mines in the river, and I saw that the able and gallant senior naval officer, Captain Nunn, also felt somewhat uncertain when I said that I wanted the warships to keep pace with the bellums. . . .

The labour of pushing and pulling and punting the bellums through the thick reeds was immense, and progress was painfully slow. In the case of disaster it would have been impossible to retreat. All the boats would be lost, sunk, abandoned or taken. All the wounded would be drowned. But the Turkish positions could not be taken without bellums. It was impossible for the infantry to wade, for in many places the water was out of their depths. On the other hand, the warships could not defeat the Turks alone. Townshend could not help feeling that no leader had ever been called upon to fight such an extraordinary battle as this, the first under his command, and it was an extra anxiety for him to know, as he did, that his officers had little or no confidence in the bellum business, and viewed the whole business with the utmost concern. He records in his diary that he felt rather like a prize-fighter before a doubtful contest—longing for it to begin. He expressed his anxiety to Whitmore, his more than faithful servant who had been with him

fourteen years. But Whitmore believed in his master with all his heart and soul and said: "It's all right, sir; you'll have the Townshend luck all right." And Townshend was comforted.

He writes on this day in his diary just before setting out on what was to be a momentous expedition, proud words, confident in himself.

For nothing would I let anyone have this command now. Whatever the difficulties of the water-boat fighting, the appalling heat and absolutely certain high rate of sunstroke, Sir John has deliberately decided it should be done and I am therefore determined to carry it through. But no one must interfere with me, of that I am determined. . . .

He made the *Espiègle* his headquarters—a flagship!—and before going on board, went round the whole fleet in a steam launch, stopping here and there at the different headquarters or groups. Everyone was ready and tense with excitement for the next day's curious engagement.

The start was at six o'clock in the morning. They expected to be blown up every moment by a mine, but nothing happened, and it was not till later that they found out there were plenty of mines but they were not contact mines. They had to be fired by means of a key on an electric switch. Moreover, the connection had been so long in the water as to have become damp. Later on the electric keyboard for exploding the mines was discovered on a little sand island. It was in charge of an elderly Turkish naval officer, who had been unable to make any of the mines explode.

The first objective of the battle of Kurna was "the curtain," formed by positions known as Norfolk Hill, Two Gun Hill, One Tower Hill and the

line of the Birbeck Creek. The 17th Brigade advanced painfully through the thick reeds, while the *Espiègle* kept pace with them as well as she could. The fire of the British guns, continually shortening their range, kept silent the guns in the Turkish redoubts. Then the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry left their bellums and rushed Norfolk Hill at the point of the bayonet, one officer (Captain Brooke), the first man to get into the redoubt, being shot dead, at the head of his company. Little loss attended the capture of this redoubt, and the attack struggled forward to Two Gun Hill and One Tower Hill. There the resistance was feeble in the extreme. All the guns, including the 4.7 of the Naval Flotilla were all over them, and they hardly replied at all. At one of the positions was a Krupp gun and a Turkish lieutenant of artillery: the rest of the garrison had fled. The night passed quietly, and in the morning the attack was renewed. This consisted chiefly in a frontal attack on the Bahran position, which was the Turkish main line of resistance, and a wide turning movement against the line of sand hills running north from that position.

The land attack was to be supported by the fire of the constantly advancing ships, and the river section of the artillery. Fears of the hidden mines were a constant source of anxiety. The force approached Bahran, and the elderly Turkish naval lieutenant who had been in charge of the electric switch-board controlling the mines was placed on a mine-sweeper and made to point out the position of the mines as they went on. This he did smilingly, and with great vigilance. But nothing happened, and the old sinner probably knew that nothing could happen as the connections were out of order. The silence of the enemy was unaccountable. Then suddenly an aeroplane appeared and threw down a message that the Turks had precipitately aban-

doned the place and fled northward. This was the first appearance of an aeroplane in Mesopotamia.

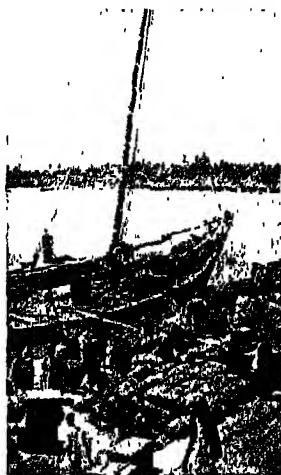
At that crisis Townshend took one of those sudden decisions, the wisdom or unwisdom of which will show the difference between a competent and an incompetent leader of men. He decided to pursue the Turks right up to Amarah, giving them no breathing time, and hoping to catch them before they could rally again. There was a certain amount of risk in this. For one thing, he could not tell with certainty what reserves there might be at Amarah. He communicated his decision to General Nixon, who had come up from Kurna on his own steamer and, as was the case all through, the latter allowed him to follow out his own decisions in his own way. The little naval flotilla took up the pursuit and the *Espiègle* (which Townshend had made his Headquarters) began to shell the Turkish steamer *Mosul* and the gunboat *Marmarice*, which it was overhauling, with her 4.7 guns. He left his staff officers at Ezra's Tomb, and continued the chase in the *Espiègle* accompanied only by Captain Peel and his A.D.C., Captain Bastow. Then the ship grounded on one of the shallows of this tantalising serpentine river, and Townshend with Captain Nunn, Commander of the *Espiègle*, pulled off in a boat to the *Marmarice* which was also aground and abandoned by her crew. A few wounded Turks left on board said that the Arabs of the marshes had looted all the rifles and ammunition they could, murdered some of their companions and fled into the marshy wastes. Then Townshend decided to leave the *Espiègle* and the heavy sloops, a few miles north of Ezra's Tomb, and to continue the pursuit in the armed despatch steamer *Comet* with a few light gunboats.

They found the other Turkish steamer, the *Mosul*, two miles further on, flying the white flag,

with several officers and a company of infantry on board who, in mortal dread of being murdered by the Arabs, were delighted to surrender. The pursuit was once more taken up, all the Arab villages on the banks displaying white flags, and men, women and children salaaming as they passed. At Kila Salih, a town as large as Kurna, there was also a great display of white flags. The Sheikh, or head man, came on board and Townshend told him that 15,000 men were on his heels, and that he was at once to collect supplies for them. This "bluff" was most successful as he knew full well that the news would be passed on to Amarah by a swift camel man, and might induce them to desist from further resistance.

At a point twelve miles from Amarah, Townshend's first idea was to wait for his leading brigade to arrive in ships, feeling sure that there would be a stout resistance at Amarah, and that it would be ridiculous to attempt to take the place with one armed tug, a small paddle-wheeled river steamer and a total crew of fifteen sailors and British soldiers doing the work of marines. Captain Nunn, as is the way with sailors, was anxious to go on and chance it, and Townshend finally decided he would take the risk. The *Shaitan* was sent on as an advance guard, and he followed in the *Comet* and two armed tug-boats.

As they approached, they could see the *Shaitan* continue on past the town, chasing a Turkish steamer, and by 1.30 p.m. on June 3rd, the *Comet* was alongside the Custom House at Amarah, where the Turkish Commander at the battle of Kurna, Halim Bey, the Governor of Amarah, three or four colonels and some thirty or forty other officers went on board to surrender. In addition, a whole battalion of Turkish pompiers, (one of the Turkish fire brigade battalions sent



SCENES FROM THE TIGRIS



from Constantinople to reinforce Halim Bey) sent word that they were at the barracks also ready to surrender.

One of the lieutenants of the *Comet*, with a coxswain and a private of the Dorsets, who was acting as a marine, were then sent to the barracks, and these three Englishmen received the surrender of the whole Battalion, marched them down to the quay and aboard one of the big iron lighters, so that they might be anchored in the stream under the British guns.

Townshend kept up his bluff. He made a scene with the Governor when he was told that there were no supplies available, spoke of the 15,000 men close at hand, and was then offered plenty of Turkish biscuits which he accepted grumblingly, but insisted on sheep being collected at once.

The next day, the Arabs of the town started to loot the residences of the Turkish officials, and the hospitals, food supply depôts, etc. No picquets were available to land and deal with this disorder, for the total force with Townshend was only about twenty-five British soldiers and sailors! The crowd of Arabs were busily removing furniture, carpets, beds and so forth from the hospital and elsewhere and working like ants on the river front, so a machine gun on the bridge of the *Comet* opened fire on those looting the hospital on the river front. The crowd fled in all directions, dropping their bundles. They must have found out how few the British were in reality, and that there was no chance of a force being landed to stop the looting. The Norfolk Regiment arrived on the 4th, also General Nixon and the Headquarters Staff, and by the 6th all the forces were united at Amarah.

It had been the nearest shave, but as Private Whitmore had foretold, the "Townshend luck" held. Had he been only a couple of hours later in



arriving at Amarah there would have been an organised resistance, and a butcher's bill instead of a bloodless victory. It must have been the report that food had been demanded for 15,000 troops of the Sheikh at Kila Salih which induced Halim Bey and the officers to surrender so meekly.

In a letter to his wife after the occupation of Amarah he gives a most amusing account of the whole affair.

. . . Three shells burst quite close to me standing by the guns, but I came to no harm, and you may believe me when I say how much I enjoyed the whole thing—my first battle in command of a large force of troops and war vessels. . . . About forty to fifty Turkish officers, including their General, surrendered and gave up their swords and arms to myself and twenty-two men, and I wondered why they did not fall upon me and kill me. I gave them an awful telling off in French for not having men's rations and biscuits in their stores at Amarah, because I said: "Here are all my troops arriving and I am short of food, and I called them a lot of lazy Turks for not having proper food management. You never saw such a scene as I made—and my language! All acted, for not a soldier could arrive for nearly two days, and I was in a nice hole if they found it out! . . . In the morning just as they all found out I had no one with me, the first transport with the Norfolk Regiment steamed in. There was great cheering, and then I laid down and slept. . . .

General Nixon now contemplated taking Nasiriyeh, borrowing the 18th Brigade from Townshend's force for the purpose. After Nasiriyeh had been taken the 18th Brigade was to return to Townshend's force, and he would advance to take

Kut el Amara, the very important strategic point at the junction of the River Tigris with the Hai River, a stream that connects Kut with Nasiriyeh.

From information received through the Intelligence at Headquarters, the Turks on the Tigris were not considered sufficiently numerous to be formidable. Moreover, a considerable portion were known to be deficient in artillery and general stores. It was pointed out that any reinforcements which might be sent to the Turks from Anatolia or the Caucasus had to make a long and trying march of several weeks to reach Baghdad, and it was also extremely unlikely that any efficient force could be spared from the main Turkish army. The view of the Headquarters Staff in Mesopotamia consequently was that, though a new commander, Nouredin Bey, had reached Baghdad from Constantinople, it would be beyond his powers to make an efficient attack on the two brigades of the 6th Division in and near Amarah, supplied as they were with heavy artillery, naval guns, aeroplanes, wireless telegraphy, etc. So it was decided to advance on Kut el Amara as soon as possible. But Townshend asked for a six months' reserve of supplies to be placed at Amarah, and a supply of gun and rifle ammunition in proportion. For he held it to be an accepted principle of war that any isolated force which might have to hold its own unaided, should also be able to last out for six months.

General Nixon opposed his demand. He said that six months' reserve of supplies were based on a misapprehension of the authorised arrangements for the force under his command. Six weeks (not months) reserve for the whole Mesopotamian Army was the total amount authorised by the Headquarters in India. Everything was to be done strictly according to regulations—the peculiar necessities of this par-

ticular case were apparently not to be taken into account.

But Townshend was sure that he was in the right, and he told General Nixon very frankly that if he was only authorised to have six weeks' supply, he would on his own responsibility purchase six months' supplies and store them at Amarah. This he proceeded to do, and the stores thus purchased were magazined eventually at Kut el Amara and enabled him to hold out there as long as he did. Perhaps the worst example of all was the scarcity of medical stores of all kinds, by which the sufferings of the wounded men were increased a thousandfold. There never seems to have been a shortage of medical stores in Basra itself, but only at the front where they were so sorely needed. The supply of such things as castor oil, quinine, lime juice and fresh vegetables was lamentably short of requirements. Ice was available for all hospitals in Basra during the hot weather of 1915, but certainly not regularly available at Ahwaz, Nasiriyeh or Amarah, nor was there for some time any ice manufacturing plant in any place outside Basra. In March Sir Arthur Barrett was asked if he wanted any ice machines and he replied he did not need any! In June, General Sir John Nixon asked for four machines to get a ton of ice daily: but they were not even sent away from India till July 28th. The supply of ice outside Basra was always inadequate, although ice was not a luxury but an absolute necessity for the sick in such a climate. These details are taken from the "Vincent-Bingley Report on the Medical Arrangements in Mesopotamia."

So great was the heat and so unhealthy the climate that there were 1,200 men on the sick list ten days after the occupation of Amarah, besides large numbers left behind at Kurna. Townshend had the constitution of an ox, but the climate, the

anxieties and the responsibilities laid him low at last. On his return from a reconnaissance beyond Amarah, he fell ill with violent vomiting and diarrhoea, and in a day or two was "as weak as a child with relapsing fever," a brand of fever peculiar as a rule to East Africa. There was no ice at Amarah, and he was taken down to Basra, put on board a hospital ship going to Bombay in the hope that the change of air would do him good. He engaged to be back in a month, for he was to advance from Amarah to take Kut el Amara in September. As he says:—

It was only my splendid constitution that pulled me through. I had a narrow shave for my life on that voyage, on which Major Simmons of the Indian Medical Service, well known as one of the best doctors in the service, and one of the kindest men I have ever met, gave me every comfort and care. . . .

A week at St. George's Hospital in Bombay followed, and then at the request of his personal friend, Sir James Roberts, C.I.E., of the I.M.S., he was taken on to Simla and stayed with Sir James at his house.

His illness, though very severe, which brought him close to death, was not of long duration. He had determined to be back well enough to lead the advance from Amarah to Kut in September. At Sir James Roberts' house at Simla early in July he was injected for the relapsing fever. The fever was driven out of him in one day, and by the middle of the month he was staying with the Viceroy at Viceregal Lodge, rapidly recovering his strength.

Sir James, who attended him with such care and skill, wrote:

He was a man of iron nerve. His own approach

to death did not shake him, as I discovered when he was with me at Simla in 1915. It had failed to shake him when he nearly died of dysentery in Cairo in the 'eighties. He was always calm and collected under fire, as I had noticed at Hunza Nagar, and he was the same in Mesopotamia. Probably all men fear death: some more, some less. Certainly Townshend was among the latter. . . .

From Sir James Roberts' house at Simla he sent his first letter home to his wife since his illness:—

This is the first day, my darling, I am up and dressed and am now rapidly getting strong. After the business was all over at Amarah, I was on a long reconnaissance all day along the road to Baghdad, and no one looked after me to see that I had any food and I was too much taken up with my work to think of food, and so I went empty all day under a blazing sun. When I got back my head was on fire and I vomited everything I touched. The sun had taken me and thrown me down and, strong as I am, I was a helpless weak child in two days. To save my life they sent me down in a gunboat to catch the hospital ship leaving Basra for Bombay, and Sir John Nixon himself helped to carry me on board. I nearly died on the voyage. The doctor sat up all night with me putting oxygen into me. But you know I never give in. . . . You can imagine the trial of the journey from Bombay to Simla; not able to walk without being held up. A doctor and a nursing sister took me up. . . .

They say such a rapid, hard-hitting pursuit after a victory has hardly a parallel. Eighty miles without stopping, and I was so excited and never going to sleep and so determined to destroy all the

Turks that I ate nothing. They used to bring me a biscuit or a cup of tea. I took all their guns but two. My constant watchword was: "Smite them hip and thigh—the sword of the Lord and Gideon!" I am sure no bloodhound ever followed up his man fugitive with more tenacity.

I told you, darling, that I only wanted my chance! You should have seen the British and Indian soldiers cheering me as I stood on the *Comet*. I must have the gift of making men (I mean the soldier men) love me and follow me. I have only known the 6th Division for six months, and they'd storm the gates of hell if I told them to. . .

Rather an incoherent letter, and not wanting in a little trumpet-blowing. But how natural! The first letter he had written to his wife for a long time, and he was naturally so proud of having had his chance at last and taken it! A page of the letter is devoted to his seryant Whitmore:—

. . . Whitmore has hopelessly broken down. He knocked up directly we got to Basra. Could do nothing in the heat. At Kurna, before the battle, he utterly collapsed but persisted in joining me at Amarah. He was not much use, but did his best seeing me so ill. He attended me down the river on the hospital ship, would not leave the door of my cabin, when he knew I was so ill. The doctors and nurses said it was quite pathetic, he was like a faithful dog, but a skeleton himself like I was, and he had frightful diarrhœa. He is now in the Civil Hospital at Simla and recovering, but I think it is time I pensioned him home. . . Kiss my darling Audrey for me and tell her why I don't write. I am so tired. Your loving,

CHARLIE.

At Simla he was highly complimented by the Viceroy, who entertained him for a time, and while there he wrote a letter to his old friend Sir James Wolfe Murray in which he expresses himself as much puzzled with regard to what the Indian Government really intended with regard to the campaign in Mesopotamia. Whether they really meant to go on to Baghdad or even Kut. Others were puzzled besides Townshend. The truth was that the Government could not be brought to make up its mind. I quote from Townshend's letter to Wolfe Murray.

*Aug. 8.* I passed the medical board yesterday and am sailing from Karachi August 15th to resume my command in Mesopotamia. I have been very ill but made a rapid recovery owing, the doctors say, to my good constitution. . . . I believe I am to advance from Amarah to Kut el Amara directly I get back to my Division. The question is where are we going to stop in Mesopotamia? . . . I stayed with the Viceroy last month but could get nothing out of him as regards his policy. We have certainly not got enough troops to make certain of taking Baghdad, which I hear is being fortified and guns of position installed. We can take no risks of a defeat in the East. Imagine a retreat from Baghdad and the consequent instant rising of the Arabs of the whole country behind us, to say nothing of the Persians and the Afghans, for the Amir only keeps his country out of the war with difficulty. You may afford to have reverses and retreats in France, perhaps, but not in the East and keep any prestige. Of our two divisions in Mesopotamia mine is complete, but Gorringer's has no guns or divisional troops, and whenever Nixon wants them for himself he takes them from me if Gorringer has to go

anywhere! I consider we should hold what we have got and not advance any more so long as we are held up in the Dardanelles. . . .

From a friend in the Foreign and Political Department at Simla, Townshend received a letter, dated August 9th, in which the following passages occur:—

The question of the occupation of Kut el Amara is still in the balance, I understand, but I think there is little doubt the operations will be sanctioned. There is no doubt that there are many good military reasons for seizing Kut, and politically I think there are no objections. But I entirely agree with you that we should be very careful before we go any further. I do not think there is an idea at present of an advance to Baghdad, and unless the forces at our disposal were more than adequate for the purpose, this Department would very strongly deprecate such a move.

This is all to the point as showing how loth Townshend was to advance unless he was greatly reinforced. But the most clear statement was made by the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Beauchamp Duff, who is reported to have said to him, when he suggested he ought to have at least 30,000 men for the job: "I quite agree with you. Not one inch shall you go unless I make you up to 30,000 men."

In spite of the great heat, and his weak state, Townshend embarked at Karachi on August 16th, to resume command of his Division.



## CHAPTER XIX

### THE BATTLES OF KUT EL AMARA AND CTESIPHON

NOUREDDIN, the Turkish General, was entrenched astride the Tigris at Essinn, covering Kut. The Turks were also entrenching a strong position at Ctesiphon for the defence of Baghdad, in case of the defeat of Nouredin at Essinn, and preparations were being made on the left bank of the river for the bringing up of guns.

The idea of a rush into Baghdad was in the air. Sir Percy Cox, the political officer, said the occupation of Baghdad would have the same effect as that of Constantinople. Townshend felt that if he once got the Turks on the run after Kut el Amara was passed, he should keep them "on the run," for if the force were to be thoroughly destroyed it must be pursued. On the other hand, if it were ascertained that reinforcements had actually reached Baghdad from Mosul or elsewhere, such pursuit should not be attempted. He had, in short, to "wait and see."

He was refused sufficient supplies. On his own responsibility he purchased large quantities, and these were afterwards eaten in Kut! He was refused transport, and so could not manœuvre with one of his Brigades further than three miles from the river.

It was indeed the old story of bricks without straw. Both river and land transport were lamentably insufficient, and Townshend was calmly told by General Nixon "to cut his coat according to his cloth!" Nevertheless, he was ordered to take the offensive on a large scale, and thus sums up the treatment he received:—

All the elements demanded by the strategic offensive were lacking. There was an insufficiency of the numbers required by the offensive, which demands great superiority in numbers: no copious stream of reinforcements, munitions and supplies followed up the striking force. And the essential principle of rapidity was, owing to the lack of transport, out of the question. . . .

And he adds an expression of his own opinion, as what should have been done at that moment.

. . . Having taken Amarah and Nasiriyeh, we should have consolidated our position in the Basra Province with minimum forces entrenched strongly at Amarah, Nasiriyeh, and Ahwaz, and the principal mass fortified at the Central Place of Basra. . . . Only in the event of the success of the Allies in France or at Gallipoli should the strategic offensive have been taken in Mesopotamia.

Townshend's idea of an effective pursuit was quite rational, but it counted on the provision of adequate transport. There had been no pursuit after the battle of Shaiba on account of the lack of transport. There had been no pursuit after Nasiriyeh for the same reason, and in consequence of this 2,000 fugitives from Nasiriyeh were added to Nouredin's force at Essinn.

On September 6th, Townshend informed General Nixon that Nouredin had been reinforced and had more guns, and that he does not understand why he had not wiped out Delamain's brigade at Ali al Gharbi, which had been sent up there most imprudently while he (Townshend) was lying sick in India. He said that his advance towards Kut el Amara was slow, but how could it be otherwise considering he had to play "battledore and shuttlecock

with his transport, and fetch up troops in homœopathic doses." He added that if Noureddin had thirty guns they would have "a *tabasco* time!"

Townshend's force now concentrated at Ali al Gharbi consisted of three Infantry Brigades (16th, 17th and 18th), reinforced later by part of the 20th under General Climo. These, with the Divisional troops, made up a total of 11,000 combatants.

By September 15th, he had reached Abu Rumanah, about eight miles from the positions of the enemy, who was digging-in hard, and growing stronger daily. Major Reilly, a most daring and distinguished aviator, made a reconnaissance from the air, establishing the fact that the bulk of Nouredin's force was strongly entrenched on the left bank in a sort of "Torres-Vedras-like" line of earthworks, extending from the bank of the river in a north-westerly direction. On the right bank, a smaller force of Turks occupied about two and a half miles of works dug along the site of an ancient canal, and connected with the forces on the other side of the river by a bridge of boats.

On September 16th, an aeroplane and two officers came down among the Turks encampment. Townshend was concerned for their fate. At one time a spirit of *camaraderie* had existed between British and Turkish officers but, as Townshend drily remarks in his diary, it was being crushed out and dying down under German influence. Yet hoping for the best, he wrote to the Turkish Commander, sending money and clothes for the two officers in case they were still alive.

Sir John Nixon sent to say he intended to be present at the battle, but added that he only wished to be on the spot in case questions of policy had to be settled there and then, for he did not desire to interfere in any way with any purely military arrangements Townshend might make.

On the morning of September 27th, the battle of Kut el Amara began. Townshend planned a feint attack on the right bank against Essinn, while the decisive attack of his principal mass would be directed against the enemy's forces on the left bank near the Suwarda marsh. This was six miles from the river, and Nouredin never suspected that the principal attack would be here, necessitating as it did a night march, and being in direct contradiction to what he had always supposed happened when the British were fighting a battle! For he knew that the ordinary procedure was a frontal attack, and he counted on a disembarkation from the ships, an advance in two columns on both sides of the river, and two separated frontal attacks. Thus, he felt absolutely confident in his strong position astride the stream. Much of his force was on the right bank of the Tigris, and he had even marched his general reserve from the left bank by way of his boat bridge, thinking Townshend intended to attack him on the right bank, as he had demonstrated with his principal mass towards Essinn.

Indeed, he really thought the attack from the British would be simultaneous on both banks, and if it had been, his victory would have been certain. But Townshend feinted, as has been shown, on the right bank, drawing Nouredin's reserves to this point, and by a rapid night march of six miles or so, he reached his own boat bridge lower down the river.

Sir John Nixon had arrived to witness the fight, and stayed with Townshend on his post of observation all day, not in any way interfering with his plans and orders, and allowing him to carry on as if he, the senior general, were not present.

Most ably seconded by Generals Fry and Delamain, who both carried out his instructions to the letter, Townshend won a great victory. The Turks lost 1,700 killed and wounded, left 1,200 prisoners

and seven guns in the hands of the British, and fled in the night in a northerly direction. Delamain was sent to occupy Kut itself, General Hoghton was to take in the wounded, collect arms, and then follow into Kut. Townshend reserved for himself the task of following up the enemy as he had done at Kurna. He wanted to overtake the Turks on the march, break them up and keep them from the river to which they must go for water. He perhaps did have a vision of entering Baghdad close on the heels of the fugitives, as he had done at Amarah.

But he had not taken into account the difficulties of navigation on that most exasperating river. There was very little water, and many shoals to get past. The ships stuck two whole days in the neighbourhood of Kut; and when they did finally get off, it was just too late.

The Turks retreated in good order along both banks, not at all flying in rout as they had after Kurna. The possibility of driving them forward into Baghdad vanished into air! It was no further from Kut to Baghdad than from Kurna to Amarah, but the chase was a very different one. The enemy was retreating in good order and not in a rabble as at Kurna. The river, as already noticed, was at its shallowest. It soon became evident that the Turks could rally at Ctesiphon in their prepared position, which was one of very great strength.

The battle of Kut el Amara was won by the turning manœuvre alone. The decisive attack itself had hung in the balance at one time of the day. The Indian troops were a doubtful quantity, and Delamain told Townshend afterwards that he did not think they would storm trenches again if put to it. In fact, the success of the turning manœuvre was brought about solely by the prodigies of valour performed by the Dorset Regiment. The whole plan had wellnigh miscarried by the desertion of two or

three men of a Punjabi regiment to the Turks, whom they informed of the feint and the intended march back to the left bank by night. Fortunately for Townshend, Nouredin did not believe the story of the deserters, and thought it was a ruse of the British to mislead him.

An illustration of how little insignificant events may spoil a General's plans was instanced in a curious way in Delamain's force. It appears that, again for want of transport, he had not been able to bring with him the cooking-pots of the Indian cavalry. They refused to use the Arab pots found in the villages *en route*, so that none of the cavalry could be used to push on the pursuit! This shows the danger of using native troops, with all their caste prejudices, in foreign countries.

Major Reilly, whose assistance as aviator had been so invaluable to Townshend throughout the operations, now reported that the retreating enemy had halted at Ctesiphon, were installed in the formidable defence works (which had been prepared for this very emergency) and sat astride the river on both banks, as they had at Kut el Amara.

General Nixon, in supreme command, reported to the General Staff in India that there were now two courses open to the British troops: (1) to discontinue the pursuit, and (2) to press on with ships and gunboats, keep in touch with the enemy and harass his retreat as much as possible, in order to prevent him from making a further stand.

He favoured the second alternative, being of opinion that the harassing pursuit, however slow it might be owing to the shallow river, would have a demoralising effect on the Turks, and a favourable one on the inhabitants of those portions of Mesopotamia now in the hands of the British.

But Townshend thought differently and, as had been the case on so many occasions in his life as a

soldier, his verdict was the right one. He notes in his diary of October 3rd:—

The Army Commander does not seem to realise the weakness and danger of his line of communications. We are now some 380 miles from the sea, and have only two weak divisions, including my own, in the country. There is my division to do the fighting and Goringe's to hold the line of communication from Kut to the sea. There is no possible support to give me if I receive a check, and the consequences of a retreat are not to be imagined. Thus, I feel it my duty to give my opinion plainly to the Army Commander, whether he likes it or not! . . . The line of communication should be secured before everything, and a line of five or six days' good marching must be considered a long one. An advance along a long line of communications is always productive of trouble. A navigable river like the Tigris may form a very good line, but it must be amply patrolled by war vessels to keep the Arabs in check.

It seemed indeed to Townshend that it was unwise to continue the pursuit any longer, so he decided to halt, land the 18th Brigade and its battery at Azizieh and report to Nixon (who was at Kut) that the forces should return to that place and consolidate. As Nixon was on the spot it was necessary to ascertain his views. If he had been at Basra or even at Amarah, Townshend would have taken the responsibility on himself and returned to Kut, *for he was absolutely against a further advance without at least two divisions, i.e., an Army Corps, under his command.* This was the position when he sent his famous telegram which was afterwards to be so much discussed in press and Parliament. It was

addressed to General Nixon's Chief of Staff from Townshend at Azizieh, and worded as follows:—

By the aviator's report attached you will see that the chance of breaking up the retreating Turkish forces which by now have taken up a position at Salman Pak, (*i.e.*, Ctesiphon) no longer exist. That position is astride the Baghdad road and the Tigris, and is estimated to be six miles of entrenchments. They have also been probably reinforced from Baghdad. If I may be allowed to express an opinion, I think that up to the battle of Kut our object has been to occupy the strategical position of Kut and consolidate ourselves in the Province of Basra. Ctesiphon is now held by the defeated Turkish forces. Should it not be considered politically advisable by the Government to occupy Baghdad at present on account of the doubtful position at the Dardanelles, and the possibility of our small force being driven out of Baghdad by strong forces from Anatolia, which would compel us to retire down a long line of communications (Baghdad to the sea is some 400 miles) teeming with Arabs more or less hostile, whose hostility would become active on hearing of our retreat, then I consider that, on all military grounds, we should consolidate our position at Kut. The sudden fall of the water which made the advance of our ships most difficult, slow and toilsome, upset our plans of entering Baghdad on the heels of the Turks while they were retreating in disorder. If, on the other hand, it is the desire of the Government to occupy Baghdad, then unless great risk is to be run, it is in my opinion absolutely necessary that the advance from Kut by road should be carried out methodically by two Divisions or one Army Corps, or by one Division supported closely by



another complete Division, exclusive of the garrisons of the important places of Nasiriyeh, Ahwaz and Amarah. It is absolutely impossible to send laden ships up river now. . . .

Townshend deliberated long before he sent the above telegram. He did not consider it discipline to protest. But his long experience of the army told him that if he considered the carrying out of orders might entail disaster to his country, his duty was to warn his superior officer. Having done that, he was quite ready to carry out any definite order given him, though he might feel sure all the time that he was heading straight for disaster. Herein he recognised the difference between risky situations in military and civil life. In a political office, if a subordinate differ from his chief, it is his duty to resign, and this is generally what happens. But, in a military situation it is the duty of a subordinate officer to assist his superior officer in whatever way that officer may order, though it may be quite against his own opinions. Nor could Townshend forget that the Commander-in-Chief had said to him at Simla: "*Not one inch shall you go beyond Kut el Amara unless I make you up to 30,000 or 40,000 men.*" There seemed no prospect of such reinforcements. Even if he succeeded in winning the approaching battle of Ctesiphon and entering Baghdad with his forces, it could not be long before he would have to withdraw them, weakened as they would be by battle. For they would not be able to repel the large reinforcements that the Turks would at once pour in from Anatolia and the Caucasus. Of course, if Gallipoli had been successful, they could advance on Baghdad which would then have fallen an easy prey.

It is impossible to disregard the fact that political objects were allowed to override military ones

throughout the whole of the war. The political effect of the occupation of Baghdad on the Turkish forces as a whole, were considered to be so important that it was resolved to occupy the place at all hazards, even with all the terrible risks pointed out by General Townshend.

In answer to his long telegram of protest, Townshend received the following from the General Staff:

Every thing points to your having to turn the Turks out of Salman Pak (Ctesiphon) position. Please report from Azizieh whether you propose to concentrate your division, and if so, where. Azizieh would be quite suitable from aeroplane point of view, as our machines could then visit Baghdad. It is reported that they have already had a most disturbing effect on the enemy. It seems desirable to form an advanced depôt wherever you concentrate, and return all ships and barges to Kut to refill. . . .

Later in the day he received another communication (in response to his expressed opinion that two Divisions were necessary to take Baghdad) in the course of which he was informed that it was the Army Commander's intention to open the way to Baghdad as he understood another Division was being sent from France.

This seemed to him ridiculous. There was no possible chance of any Division from France arriving in time. It had probably not yet even started! It was a mere childish pretence for an excuse to take the risk of an immediate advance with what forces were on the spot.

It was useless to argue any further. Many generals would undoubtedly support Nixon's opinion that it was best to push on into Baghdad at all risks: generals who had had plenty of experience in wars against savages, but not against well-trained

troops skilled in the principles of strategic manœuvring. Nixon had always had confidence in Townshend's skill, giving him the command and sole conduct of the operations. But now that it was plain that Townshend had some doubts of success, he should have taken the command himself and employed his subordinate under him.

Thus was the risky advance decided on, much against the wish of the General responsible for the actual operations. It appeared from a statement in the House of Commons that the Cabinet approved of the dash forward, though, as Townshend quaintly notes in his diary, "what the House of Commons had to do with my tactical pursuit after a victory I could not quite make out!"

He was determined that there should be no mistake as to who was responsible for the forward movements. The Staff appeared to be taking measures and giving orders on their own and he wired:—

Will you kindly inform me if the Army Commander is commanding this operation in person or if he intends me to command as I did in the Kut operations, as I must know with reference to dispositions and orders. . . .

Upon which he had the satisfaction of getting a somewhat ambiguous reply:—

You will of course command the 6th Division as before.

Townshend then, after further communications between himself and the higher authorities, decided to concentrate at Azizieh. Every day brought intelligence of the strengthening of the enemy's position, and he was extremely unwilling to risk sixteen or seventeen miles' march in the heat, only to run his head into another strongly fortified position. There were still more serious reasons why he should not

run unnecessary risks. As he graphically wrote in his diary under date of October 11th, "the men's tails were down!"

It was a great relief to all concerned that the attack on the position at Zeur was to be deferred for the present, and the troops at Azizieh to remain strictly on the defensive, that place being converted into an entrenched camp of sufficient strength to assume the offensive from time to time around it. Reinforcements were promised him and he sat down to rest and wait for them.

About the end of October, drafts of Indian recruits began to arrive to fill up the gaps; but they contained a large Mohammedan element with a widespread spirit of unwillingness to advance against Ctesiphon, the Holy Place of Salman Pak, a saintly follower of the Prophet. One whole Indian Army Battalion, chiefly made up of men from across the border on the North-West Frontier, had to be sent back owing to desertions to the enemy. The men were a distinct danger to the whole force, but the decision to send it back was a serious one for Townshend to have to make, for it reduced the number of effectives for the next battle to 8,600 bayonets.

Assuredly it was very hard on any general to have to depend so much on Indian troops who might, or might not, fail him in the hour of need. The three British battalions were the backbone of the Division, but they were reduced to the strength of only half a battalion each. Scores of British soldiers of the Dorset, Norfolk and Oxford and Bucks regiments, were held back at Basra employed in all sorts of ways, as town police, as extra clerks, as batmen for officers (including Indian officers, who were not supposed to have British batmen), as launch chauffeurs, as marines on gunboats or as extra hands to strengthen reserve crews of blue-

jackets. All these were taken from the bayonets of his Division. He tried hard to get some of them back for his fighting force, and failed.

The Turkish force at Ctesiphon, under Nouredin Pasha, amounted roughly to the same number as Townshend's own. A covering force at Zeur about fourteen miles north of Azizieh, consisted of about 4,000 men, of which a detachment (1,500 camel corps, 1,000 sabres and four guns) had been pushed forward to El Kutunie. Constant skirmishing took place between the British cavalry and these Turks, who were assisted by Arab horsemen.

Townshend therefore resolved to surprise and destroy this detachment by a night march, an operation which, if successful, would do much to improve the morale of the untrained recruits now forming such a large proportion of his forces. He was not going to run any unnecessary risks, so took with him a large force of 12,000 men, for it was quite possible that Nouredin had advanced this detachment to El Kutunie as a bait to draw him on and would then fall upon him with his whole force!

Napier has laid down that night marches are seldom happy. Townshend had had experience of at least two such marches in his military career, and he shared the opinion of Napier. One had been the night march under Sir Herbert Stewart after the battle of Abu Klea, in 1885, and another was that very difficult night march across the desert before the battle of Firket in 1896.

But the night march to El Kutunie was completely successful. At first glimpse of dawn, Townshend had moved against the camp. After some desultory shelling, the enemy fled northward. The ground was too broken to permit of cavalry operations, and the enemy retired in good order. Townshend then burned the camp at El Kutunie and returned to Azizieh, well content with the moral

effect of his blow, though disappointed that he had been unable to capture the guns and chase the Turks.

The enemy was not the only source of trouble for Townshend at this time. He had asked for more defence material (wire, searchlights, etc.) for the works at Azizieh, but Nixon refused to send them and moreover ordered the return of any tents that were with the Division as well as of everything else that did not come within field service scale. False economy everywhere. Spoiling a ship for a ha'p'orth of tar, while millions were poured out like water on the Western Front, and much wasted withal.

He then began to arrange his plan of action for the advance on Ctesiphon, keeping in view the possibility of a further advance to Baghdad, if his preliminary operations were crowned with success. He thought that by advancing with a mixed Brigade as far as El Kutunie on November 15th, he would find himself in a position to give battle to the enemy at Ctesiphon on November 19th.

Through various unforeseen circumstances he was not able to give fight till three days later, the 22nd. He left a small garrison at Azizieh, including a hundred or so of convalescents able to handle a rifle but not to march, and two guns for which he had no means of transport.

Always he pursued the same tactics as he had learned in his Napoleonic studies—*viz.*, to unite all his forces and move forward, *united*. He intended to attack the covering force of the enemy at Zeur, forcing it to retire on the main body at Ctesiphon, about sixteen to nineteen miles further on. Many things might occur which would compel such a plan to be modified but, on putting the whole matter before the Army Commander, he was told that the general idea was approved, and that it was sound to

defer final decision according to circumstances.

The strength of the Turkish force at Ctesiphon was estimated by the British Intelligence Department and the aerial reconnaissance at about 1,100 combatants and thirty-six guns. But Townshend discovered on the actual day of battle that the numbers were nearer 20,000 Turks and forty guns! Large reinforcements had come from Mosul and elsewhere for Nouredin's army at Ctesiphon, making the odds against which he had to fight much more in favour of the enemy. When in captivity in Constantinople, a German officer said to him: "Instead of 9,000 infantry, you ought to have had 90,000!"

In the Mesopotamia Enquiry Report, it is stated that when Townshend advanced on November 21st to attack the Turkish entrenchments at Ctesiphon, a spirit of intense optimism animated the Headquarters and Administrative Staff. With regard to this he remarks later in his diary:

I know nothing about this "intense optimism." All I do know is that I was determined to carry through the operation if it could possibly be done, and it was my plain and simple duty to carry out the orders of my superior to the best of my ability, although his orders were against my better judgment. Personally, I had no doubts in my mind as to the extreme gravity of the results of this advance, an offensive undertaken with insufficient forces, and not only that, but an offensive undertaken in a secondary theatre of the war, where our strategy should have been to have remained on the defensive with minimum forces sufficient for that purpose. All my study indicated disaster to me. However the die was cast. And so, when Sir John Nixon asked me on the eve of the battle: "Are you confident of winning, Townshend?" I

replied: "Yes, I shall win all right." And I did win. . . .

As at Kut el Amara, Townshend advanced on both banks of the Tigris, endeavouring to paralyse a greater part of the enemy's forces entrenched along a large extent of front, by the use of a covering attack on the enemy's front, and a decisive attack on his flank. He intended it to be a decisive blow ensuring a decisive victory.

If he had had the two Divisions he had asked for, which would have made him superior in numbers to the enemy entrenched in his position, a frontal attack could have been made with two Brigades, and the other Division could have been used to envelop the flank and rear, and make the victory certain. But thanks to the parsimony of the Indian Government, Townshend had to attack an enemy at least as strong as he was, acting on the defensive in a very strong position.

The entrenchments and redoubts of the Turkish defensive position of Ctesiphon on the left bank of the Tigris extended six miles northward from the river. They were absolutely invisible. All that could be seen was a vast plain with the renowned and imposing Arch of Ctesiphon, towering up as a landmark for many miles round, and the group of tombs round it, including that famous one of Salman Pak, the barber of the Prophet himself!

At daylight the battle began. General Hoghton launched his covering attack with discretion, for he feared a trap. The vital point of the battle was the area in which the flank attack of the principal mass would be directed. It is referred to in Townshend's account of the fight as "V.P.", and it was round and about this point that the battle continued to rage.

The enemy was evidently waiting for Hoghton to approach within close range, but he was not to be



caught, and the delay was protracted. At 7.30 a.m. there was still no firing on either side. Then General Hamilton with the Brigade to make the turning attack, sent to know if he could not advance. Townshend gave permission, and by 8 o'clock he began to move on the Turkish second position or line of entrenchments. The noise of the firing at last inspired the Turkish right to open on Hoghton's force. The British artillery, and the gunboats on the river joined in, and the battle increased in violence and intensity.

The enemy could now be seen retreating in masses. This being perceived by General Delamain, he advanced with the principal mass on "V.P." Townshend joined him, hoping that it might turn to a general advance on the Diala River, and a disordered flight of the enemy.

A fierce fight was now raging at "V.P." which was carried by General Climo with the bayonet in the most brilliant manner. The trenches began to be filled with dead and dying Turks lying so thick and close together that Townshend had literally to walk on bodies to reach Delamain, who had pushed on the troops against the Turkish second line of entrenchments about 3,500 yards from "V.P." A Company or two of the Dorsets had also been detached to move in a southerly direction towards the Arch of Ctesiphon, with the object of giving a helping hand to Hoghton. Townshend says:—

In all my experience of war, I have never seen or heard of anything so fine as the deliberate and tranquil advance of the Dorsets in extended order, moving south from "V.P.", the Turks in bunches evacuating trenches in front of them and making their way towards the Arch of Ctesiphon. If only the gunboats would appear by the Arch!

But they were held up and could not get beyond Bustan at the loop of the river. . . .

Sir John Nixon and the Headquarters Staff arrived at "V.P." where the Divisional Headquarters had been fixed, and Townshend told him that all was going well, for the valiant Dorsets, with Gurkhas and Punjabis had pierced the enemy's second position in a bayonet assault and captured eight guns.

Then a change took place. Hamilton was hard pressed and could only advance with difficulty, and the cavalry column under General Melliss had also met with serious difficulties. The cavalry had begun to work round the extremity of the second-line entrenchments when they were vigorously and most unexpectedly counter-attacked by large bodies of infantry, and fell back. The enemy had been reinforced by Khalil's army corps, sent down from the Caucasus, and arriving down river on steamers and barges. A Turkish counter-offensive had developed. Wounded British and Indians were staggering back in large numbers.

Colonel Climo was carried past me severely wounded in three places, but quite cheery. This gallant soldier would have been a great loss to me at any time, but at such a critical moment it was a disaster. . . .

How bitterly Townshend felt the mean way he had been treated with regard to supplies of men and necessities appears in the next words of his diary:—

I had not a man left to throw into the principal mass. If I had had (I will not say the extra Division I needed and had asked for) even another brigade, we should have swept the Turks into the Tigris. This is a fact that no one who was

present at the battle can deny. It was hard, very hard, to stand there and realise that victory was slipping from my grasp for the want of a few troops. . . .

The plain now became dotted with hundreds of British and Indian troops walking slowly back towards "V.P." A retirement was taking place, though no order to retire had been given. Townshend resolved to hold, at least, the first position he had taken, and bivouac for the night on the field of battle in the hope that the Turks, who had lost very heavily, would retreat beyond the River Diala in the night. And this is exactly what happened. The 8,500 bayonets of the British had driven four Divisions of Turks, supported by a heavier artillery than the British, from a strong defensive position.

The English Press called the troops who fought at Ctesiphon the "Invincibles," an apt expression when it is considered that the British battalions were only three in number and each of half strength, and that the Indian battalions were composed for the great part of raw recruits. It cannot be too often repeated that, had there been anything like a solid reserve in Townshend's hands on that day, the Siege of Kut with all its horrors and eventual surrender would never have taken place.

The Turks left the British in the possession of the field, but in what a condition! Out of the 8,500 bayonets, the miserable force with which he was expected to work wonders, Townshend found there were 4,000 killed and wounded, for, as is always the case when a position has to be stormed and taken, the infantry bore practically the whole of the losses of the battle.

For the time being there was no question of a further offensive. The various columns had to be reorganised, the men and animals watered lower

down the river, stores of food and ammunition replenished, the ships brought up, and the wounded evacuated. Townshend's words show what he felt:

If I live a hundred years, I shall not forget that night bivouac at "V.P." among hundreds of wounded, who were being brought in loaded on the commissariat carts in which they were collected throughout the night. Their sufferings in these small springless carts can be easily imagined: but the way in which the medical officers worked was beyond all praise. . . .

A disgraceful responsibility rests on the Indian Government for the hideous sufferings inflicted on brave men, by the utterly inadequate arrangements made for the transport and treatment of the wounded. Such sufferings can never be realised by anyone not there. Nothing can palliate the guilt of those responsible. Much might be quoted from the Mesopotamia Report about the ghastly journey of the wounded down to Basra, the horrors of which could have been largely mitigated if not altogether avoided, had there been ample transport to bring up supplies of medical comforts and necessities, and provide space for the numbers to be conveyed. For impending casualties, preparations had only been made for 500 severely wounded, and it was apparently impossible to rectify anything which had gone wrong. If a subordinate officer dared to protest or ask for even the barest necessities beyond what had been provided or "laid down by regulations" he was at once threatened with arrest! Major Carter of the Indian Medical Service, in charge of a hospital ship at Basra, complained of the impure water and other matters, and he was told that his hospital ship would be taken away from him for an interfering faddist! The same officer, when a witness before the

Commission, volunteered the appalling evidence of what he had seen on the arrival of a convoy of sick at Basra after the battle of Ctesiphon. I quote his words from the Mesopotamia Report:

I was standing on the bridge in the evening when the *Medjidieh* arrived. She had two steel barges without any protection against the rain as far as I remember. As the ship, with two barges, came up to us I saw that she was absolutely packed, and the barges too, with men. The barges were slipped and the *Medjidieh* was brought alongside. When she was about three or four hundred yards off it looked as if she was festooned with ropes. The stench when she was close was quite definite, and I found that what I mistook for ropes were dried stalactites of human fæces. The patients were so crowded and huddled together on the ship that they could not perform the offices of Nature clear of the ship's edge, and the whole of the ship's side was covered. This is then what I saw. A certain number of men were standing and kneeling on the immediate perimeter of the ship. Then we found a mass of men huddled up anyhow, some with blankets and some without. With regard to the first man I examined. . . . He was covered with dysentery, his thigh was fractured, perforated in five or six places. He had been apparently writhing about the deck of the ship. Many cases were almost as bad. There were a certain number of cases of terribly bad bed sores. In my report I describe mercilessly to the Government of India how I found men with their limbs splinted with wood strips from "Johnny Walker" whisky boxes, "bhoosa" (compressed hay), wire, and that sort of thing. . . .

Quotations from this ghastly report could be multiplied. One such is enough to show the horrible

sufferings which our soldiers had to go through *after* they had fought so magnificently and so strenuously in that appalling climate. As may be imagined, I have omitted some of the details of the above which are too nauseating for publication, but which may all be found in the Report of the Mesopotamia Commission.

On the morning of November 23rd, the British troops were shifted to a position in front of, and about 2,000 yards from the great Arch, which in old Roman days stood within the city itself. The battle had been fought on the actual site of the walled city of Ctesiphon, which had been the most southerly point reached by the famous General Belisarius, in his campaign to recover Mesopotamia from the Persians.

But there was to be a second day of fighting, if possible more anxious than the first. Hoghton had been left at "V.P." with a small force to guard such wounded as had not yet been evacuated to the walls of Ctesiphon. Having seen the movements attending the evacuation towards the river, the Turks attacked with masses of troops from their positions beyond the Diala River at nine o'clock in the evening. They thought the British were in full retreat. Six attacks one after the other were repulsed with heavy loss, and the consequent expenditure of ammunition was a source of great anxiety.

I reinforced Delamain with the Norfolks, taken from Hamilton who was not severely pressed. As usual, Delamain was worth his weight in gold, always calm, collected, business-like, and exercising absolute control—and all soldiers know the difficulty of control when fighting becomes almost hand to hand in the trenches. In one place the Turks got into our trenches but were bombed out again by the grenadiers of the Dorsets, leaving

some twenty killed and wounded behind them. At another time the attack had become so close that I thought the last moment had come and instinctively unbuttoned the holster-flap of my revolver. . . .

General Hoghton was severely pressed all night at "V.P." It was feared that his ammunition would not hold out, but at last a message reached Townshend about 2 a.m. that the enemy had ceased their attacks. Volunteers were at once called to go out from Ctesiphon Wall with carts to take ammunition to Hoghton, and bring in wounded from "V.P." This was most successfully and gallantly accomplished. That they were not annihilated must have been due to the fact that the Turks, finding discretion the better part of valour had retired under cover of the darkness.

On the morning of November 24th, there was no enemy in sight. General Hoghton's column and the wounded from "V.P." were brought in and by noon the entire force was united at High Wall, and all the wounded evacuated to Bustan, where they were embarked on the ships and sent down to Kut. The stores of ammunition, food and water were replenished, and Townshend felt that he could now consider more calmly the whole position, and be ready for any event. He knew he would have to retire, for the Turk with his great superiority of numbers could turn his position, and menace his line of communications. Political reasons might be adduced against the retirement, but no one knew better than Townshend that once a general permits political reasons to interfere with strategical ones, that general is lost. So much is certain from all historical records.

On his return to High Wall, Townshend found that Sir John Nixon had left for Kut already, leav-

ing General Kemball, his Chief of Staff, to hear what was going to be done.

I told him what I intended to do—that I was not going to let political reasons endanger the force. If it were annihilated, the whole of Mesopotamia would fall like a ripe plum into the hands of the Turks. But I was not going to retire a moment before it was necessary or before I had sent out aerial and cavalry reconnaissances to see what the enemy was doing. . . .

The Turkish big guns in position at the bottom of the loop of the river shelled the troops at High Wall intermittently. It was these guns which had prevented the naval flotilla from advancing up the river higher than Bustan at the point of the loop. The shells fell on the ground occupied by the troops, but by good luck not many were hit. An officer of the R.E. was killed, and Townshend himself had a sufficiently near squeak whilst shaving!

He made up his mind finally to march back to Lajj on the morning of November 26th, but on finding that the Turks were already advancing from the Diala, he began the rearward movement on the night of the 25th instead.

This was a march of nearly ninety miles, with a force tired out with incessant fighting, insufficient food and with all the discouragement attendant on a retreat. But the men were splendid. Townshend himself constantly travelled up and down the column, talking to officers and men here and there to show he himself was in good spirits. Small wonder they spoke of him always as "Our Charlie." He did not dare to halt on the last two days (December 1st and 2nd): for the Turks were over twelve thousand strong, many of them fresh troops. Moreover, if the men were once to get down to the



river bank, they would lie by the water, drink their fill and fall asleep like logs. And the Turks only a few miles behind! And, worse than the Turks, the Arabs who, as was their wont, stripped naked and killed barbarously any sick men who might fall out on the march. Thirty-six miles on December 1st, and forty miles on December 2nd, and they did not halt till Shurman Bend was reached, a point six miles from Kut.

Colonel Chitty had been sent on with the Divisional Train and supply column to Kut, with orders to send out food to Shurman Bend, the news of which heartened the troops considerably.

Throughout the retreat the discipline and good order of the whole Division never failed for an hour. The retirement was made under as good conditions as in peace training. After a severe rear-guard action which took place at Ummal Tabul on December 1st, owing to Townshend being compelled to halt against his will in order to save some ships and barges on the river, not a single wounded man was left behind, though there were 500 killed and wounded in that action. Not a single gun was lost and 1,500 Turkish prisoners marched with the column throughout. Townshend, ever generous where others were concerned, says: "What would have happened if I had not had those perfect Brigade Commanders?" He was referring more particularly to General Delamain and Generals Hamilton and Melliss.

He entered Kut early on the morning of December 3rd, after the successful accomplishment of a retreat against overwhelming odds. He records, that as he watched the exhausted troops dragging themselves past him, for it could hardly be called marching, he could not help recalling from his Napoleonic studies, some words which Jomini had said of similar movements:—

Courage and firmness in adversity is more honourable than enthusiasm in success: for courage only is required to attack and carry a position, whereas heroism is necessary to carry out a difficult retreat before an enterprising and exultant enemy, and oppose to him a front of bronze without letting oneself be discouraged. It is the duty of a State to reward a good retreat equally with the most brilliant victory. . . .

Courage and firmness were certainly not wanting in the 6th Division, to which might be added a very high morale under all sorts of trying conditions.

Major Sandes, M.C., R.E., in his vivid book *In Kut and Captivity* says:—

. . . the cheeriness of a British soldier in the trying circumstances prevailing in January, 1916, must have been seen to be believed. Almost up to his waist in water, drenched to the skin by rain, frozen during the night, sniped continually by a vigilant foe, he would yet turn everything into a joke, would sing his well-known music-hall ditties, and the more trying his situation, the more he would, apparently, enjoy it! . . .

I am also tempted to steal from the same book a delightful anecdote of a private and his prisoner:—

. . . even grim war has its lighter side as evidenced by a tale told by one of the medical officers. A wounded Tommy comes marching in at dusk asking for the field ambulance. Being asked where his equipment was, he pointed over his shoulder to a shadowy figure in his rear and says laconically—"My prisoner 'as it." Behold then a grimy Turk following the injured hero and carrying, not only that hero's kit, but *also his rifle*. . . .

It is a fact attested by more than one person, that after Ctesiphon, Noureddin wanted to retire, but his second-in-command, Khalil Pasha, a young man about thirty-five years of age, told him that if he did, he (Khalil), ill as he was at the time, would lead an attack on the British flank. Noureddin's army was much demoralised but he was induced to re-form it and give up the idea of abandoning the second Turkish line at Ctesiphon. All of which but tends to show that if Townshend had had the two Divisions he had begged for, and which he had repeatedly said were necessary for his success, the result of the Ctesiphon fight would have been very different, and in all probability, the British forces would have carried Baghdad. Even German officers told some of the British officer prisoners that they considered Ctesiphon a victory for the British.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE SIEGE OF KUT

THE first entry in Townshend's diary after the troops had got safely into Kut is quite characteristic of the man:

I mean to defend Kut as I did Chitral.

He immediately wired his reasons to Headquarters for deciding to stop there instead of fighting his way further down the river. He pointed out that by holding Kut at the junction of the Tigris and Hai Rivers, he was preventing the Turkish forces from proceeding down the Hai to Nasiriyeh and attacking Basra on the flank. So long as his guns could prevent the enemy's steamers and lighters from penetrating any further down river, so long would he prevent Von der Goltz (who had now arrived to take command in Baghdad) from overrunning Mesopotamia. In addition to holding up the advance of the Turks, his stand at Kut would give time to Sir John Nixon to assemble the scattered forces now beginning to arrive at Basra, the force at Kut acting as a covering force for the concentration of new troops. But he was counting all the time with certainty on being relieved within a short time, and with that idea he immediately began to turn Kut into an entrenched camp. This would have been a useless proceeding if relief and reinforcements were not to be counted on soon; for shut up in entrenchments with a well-provided hostile force hammering at the gates, it could only be a question of time before hunger would compel them to surrender. And that is what actually

happened through the failure of the relieving force to penetrate the Turkish lines. Moreover, Von der Goltz (an old man of eighty, but a master of strategy) could have easily held Kut with a minimum force while he proceeded down the Hai to Nasiriyeh *en route* for Basra, or pass round to the northward, strike the river lower down, and there give battle to an army coming up from Basra.

Kut was in no sense a fortified place when Townshend retired to it from Ctesiphon. There were, it is true, a line of three or four blockhouses, useful, perhaps, in savage warfare; a mud-walled enclosure dignified by the name of a "fort," about 3,000 yards from the town to the north-east of the river bank, but all these defences would be useless against a modern army equipped with modern guns. An alternative was to retire to the Essinn position outside the town, but the line there offered an extent of front impossible for a force as small as Townshend's. Finally, the men were so exhausted that they could do nothing but lie down and eat and sleep for two whole days! The lack of food at Essinn and the impossibility of storing enough there would soon have led to starvation. He wired to Headquarters that he had shut himself up in Kut, with the certainty of being relieved by large forces now arriving at Basra, and with the object of delaying Von der Goltz's army advancing from Baghdad.

It was a real calamity for Townshend, this exhaustion of the troops. The Indians could not move at all, and the British soldiers were only got to work just as the advance guard of the Turks came in sight.

On December 3rd, Townshend issued a long communiqué to the troops, one of those personal messages, for which he has, strangely enough, been blamed in many quarters, on the ground that it was unnecessary to take the rank and file into his con-



"SPOT," THE DOG WHO ACCOMPANIED  
TOWNSHEND TO KUT



fidence. Yet it was just that touch of confidence in his men which made them all adore him.

This first message was as follows:—

I intend to defend Kut el Amara and not to retire any further. Reinforcements are being sent at once to relieve us. The honour of our Mother Country and the Empire demands that we all work heart and soul in the defence of this place. We must dig in deep and dig in quickly, and then the enemy's shells will do little damage. We have ample food and ammunition, but Commanding Officers must husband the ammunition, and not throw it away uselessly. The way you have managed to retire some eighty or ninety miles under the very noses of the Turks is nothing short of splendid, and speaks eloquently for the courage and discipline of this force.

There were about 9,000 combatants, to defend one and a quarter miles of front, without taking into consideration the town of Kut itself and a village known as the "Wool-Press" on the right bank of the Tigris, for the defence of which a whole Battalion had to be detached. For food, he had sixty days' supplies for British troops, and the same quantity for Indians. Thirty days' supply of grain, seventeen of fodder, four of biscuit, fifty-seven of flour and forty of atta (a kind of coarse flour). In Kut town there was sufficient food for the five or six thousand souls at which the population was estimated, to last at least three months. All the grain was bought up for the use of the troops.

Townshend calculated on being relieved shortly; he was therefore astounded when he heard from Headquarters on December 5th that "it was hoped to relieve him within two months!"

The main concentration of relief troops would be at Amarah, with the covering force in advance at



Ali-al-Gharbi. The suggested delay upset him more than he cared to own. He wired off at once that two months was too long to wait, for before then the whole Turkish army of six Divisions would be upon him, and the 6th Division in Kut would be wiped out, an event which would be a most dangerous blow to British prestige in Mesopotamia, and literally disastrous to the British Raj in India.

The following day the Army Commander wired that two months was an outside limit, after calculating the time it would take for the reinforcements to begin their advance. But it was hoped to afford a relief in less time. The telegram went on to say that retirement from Kut should only be resorted to in the last extremity, that yet another Division had been asked for, and more heavy guns, and that, as long as Townshend remained at Kut, the enemy would be ignorant of what his plans really were. He would be fulfilling the duty of a detachment by holding up superior numbers.

Townshend was well aware, from his intimate study of military history that the story of entrenched camps besieged is a story of repeated capitulations. Bazaine shut himself up at Metz, Cornwallis in Yorktown, Mack in Ulm, Masséna at Genoa. It had always been the same. Relief seldom, if ever, came to the besieged. In each case the garrison surrendered. He knew that this would probably be the fate also of Kut, but he never let any of the men under him suspect for a moment that he did not expect to be relieved in time.

The Turks invested Kut by a converging movement on both banks north and south of the Kut peninsular, while their besieging force moved against Townshend's northern front as close to the trenches as the violent fire of the British guns enabled them to do. When they could get no closer, they proceeded to dig themselves in as hard as they could, forming

a vast network of trenches and communications and covered ways, and entirely closing up the neck of the peninsular. Next, they covered the British position with guns at all points of the compass, and on both sides of the Tigris. Townshend on his side was digging in just as hard, for previously there had hardly been any trenches worthy of the name.

In December Nouredin sent in a letter asking Townshend to avoid useless bloodshed by laying down arms, pointing out that the British were enfeebled, and that a strong effort on his part would overwhelm them. He had the impudence also to complain that the British were exposing the peaceful inhabitants of Kut to the horrors of war, which was against the laws of civilised warfare! Rather humorous from one whose army was largely staffed and directed by Germans! Townshend sent a graceful reply, thanking him for his courtesy in summoning the town to surrender before the assault, and reminding him of how his friends the Germans not only always occupied towns and villages in their advance, but did so in a manner quite peculiar to themselves.

He had to send the aeroplanes to Ali-al-Gharbi (though he wanted them badly), because there were no spare parts available, and they would have been destroyed by shell fire if remaining at Kut. He was very anxious on account of the depression of the troops, at being locked up in camp, but kept up their spirits as well as he could by frequent communiqués, urging them to keep quiet and stay in their dug-outs as much as possible, and that the Army Commander had promised to have reinforcements concentrating at Sheikh-Saad within a week.

On the 8th, Townshend heard that General Aylmer was to leave Basra the next day to command the troops on the Tigris line. This was a distinct ray of hope. On the same day, he ordered

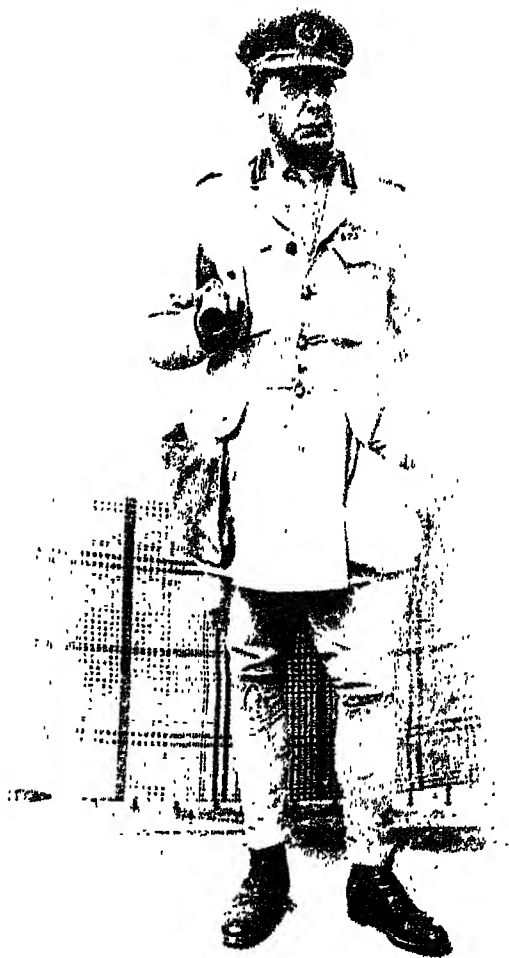
the bridge of boats to be destroyed under cover of darkness by explosives, to prevent the enemy forcing his way across during the night. Two young officers (Lieut. Sweet of the 7th Gurkhas and Lieut. Mathews, R.E.) with a party of volunteers undertook the perilous task, and carried it through successfully. It was a most dangerous operation, and Townshend recommended the two officers for the V.C., and the men for the Indian Order of Merit. They had volunteered for what appeared certain death, and waited all day in cold blood to carry out the operation in darkness, a very different affair from doing it on the spur of the moment in hot fight. But they only got the D.S.O.

Townshend received a most inspiring telegram from Aylmer on December 10th, in the following terms:—

Have assumed command Tigris line. Have utmost confidence in the defender of Chitral and his gallant troops to keep flag flying until we can relieve them. Heartiest congratulations on brilliant deeds of yourself and your command.

This must have been balm to poor Townshend, especially the kindly reference to the siege of Chitral twenty years before.

On the 10th, 11th and 12th, Kut was heavily bombarded, but the Turkish suffered 2,000 casualties, and the British loss was much less severe. The failure of the attack seems to point to the truth of the belief generally entertained that the Turks are not good at assault. The strength of the enemy's force was estimated at roughly 12,000 with between thirty and forty guns in position all around. After the assault of December 12th, the enemy appeared to settle down to deliberate and regular siege operations, completing a network of investing



TOWNSHEND ON THE ROOF OF HIS OBSERVATION POST  
AT KUT



entrenchments with the corresponding communicating ways. Townshend found the morale of his troops much improved, but there were other matters which gave him not a little anxiety. Among these was the conduct of the Arab inhabitants of the town. As he puts it:—

I knew that they were in communication with the enemy, that went without saying; and my anxiety was based on the fact that many rifles must have been buried and otherwise concealed. It was certain that the consequences might be serious if the enemy should induce them to rise in the night when an attack was in progress on our northern front. For that reason I took some of the leading inhabitants into custody and announced that I would shoot them if there was the least sign of treachery. In order to put a stop to the looting of the Arabs at the commencement of the siege, I had caused twelve men who had been caught in the act to be tried by military commission and shot—*pour encourager les autres*.

This presence in the town of so large a hostile population was a constant and great source of anxiety. At the beginning Townshend had ordered all the inhabitants to be turned out, but Sir Percy Cox interceded for them, pointing out that the women and children would inevitably perish in the desert either from hunger or the bullet of the savage desert Arab. Townshend considered that this might have a disastrous effect politically among such of the Arabs of Mesopotamia whom the British had engaged to protect from the Turks and, so very reluctantly, he modified the order to turn out all strangers and suffer only *bona fide* householders to remain. This meant, of course, that some five or six thousand people remained and only about seven

hundred were turned out. Townshend says in his diary:—

I always bitterly regretted this clemency. I did not care how many of the treacherous Arab men were killed or died in the desert, they were deserving of no consideration whatever, but the case of the women and children was a different matter.

On Christmas Eve, a determined assault was made by the Turks under Field-Marshal Von der Goltz himself, and at 2 a.m. on Christmas morning the fort was assaulted by Turks, who forced their way into one of the bastions. Two hundred pioneers were sent to relieve the garrison, and after what was styled "regular bludgeon work"—the men throwing bombs at each other at only ten yards' distance—the Turks were repulsed with great losses, estimated at two thousand killed and wounded. The losses of the defenders were 315 killed and wounded, including seventeen officers. Especially did the men of the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry cover themselves with glory in that Christmas fight. After the repulse of the Turks, Von der Goltz returned to Baghdad and Townshend devoted himself to strengthening his second line of defence.

On December 29th, the enemy sent in an officer with a white flag of truce, asking for permission to bury their dead. He was informed that four hours would be granted if the Turkish General-in-Chief wrote to ask for it, but that if the Turks used the flag of truce as a cloak to get troops up into the forward trenches (as had been done at Gallipoli) they would be fired upon with all guns at once.

Plans for the relief were now being matured. Aylmer reported that he had two Divisions with a brigade of cavalry as a relieving force, and obtained from Townshend a detailed description of the entrenchments.

This force for relief could only be properly organised after reaching Ali-al-Gharbi, and the dates for starting from that point must depend on the arrival of ships from Basra. He said he would be prepared to take risks if the condition of Kut demanded it, but would prefer to start from Ali-al-Gharbi with one Division on January 3rd. The enemy's forces had been greatly increased and were massing to oppose any attempt at relief. At the Shurman Bend, on the right bank nine miles west of Kut, there were 11,500 bayonets with 41 guns; on the left bank 12,900 bayonets and 24 guns. At Essinn 2,500 men and 18 guns, and at Sheikh Saad, on both banks, were four battalions, 800 cavalry and 1,200 camel corps. A grand total of about 30,000 combatants with over eighty guns. And the relieving force was clearly far too small! The advance detachment under Younghusband at Sheikh Saad was very roughly handled in a hard-fought engagement, and the main body of the relieving army made no progress. As the Corps Commander wired to Townshend on the night of January 5th:—

Owing to the fatigue of the troops, on account of yesterday's efforts, I have been unable to make any progress to-day.

He had troops on both sides of the river: he estimated he was opposed by 15,000 Turks: his own casualties were about 3,000 and his forward progress would necessarily be slow till reinforcements arrived.

General Kemball was entrenched on the right bank with six battalions and there were also six battalions in reserve on the left bank. A little hope was raised by news that the enemy was retiring up stream from Sheikh Saad with Aylmer in pursuit, but the British troops were greatly exhausted, and the heavy rain made movements most difficult.



It appeared that Nouredin was fighting a delaying action in order to give time for other Turkish Divisions to join him, and at one time he was thought to have retreated, but on January 10th he returned. Townshend afterwards learned that he had been actually retreating, but had been turned back by Von der Goltz and superseded in his command by Khalil Pasha, who had orders to entrench on the Wadi, a waterway probably identical with the Chubibat Canal.

Intercepting wireless messages informed the besieged that Aylmer was attacking the Turks on the Wadi on January 13th, that General Younghusband was turning the position and that General Kemball was holding the enemy in front. Younghusband, in fact, had pushed round the north of the enemy's position and his right flank was almost up to the Tigris. The enemy were supposed to be retiring. The battle had been of an obstinate and indecisive nature, and continued till nightfall. Kemball had attacked the enemy's front, but had been repulsed and had withdrawn to the east bank of the Wadi.

Townshend had no illusions as to Aylmer's real progress or his enormous difficulties, but it began to look as if he could not manage the relief force before the arrival of considerable Turkish reinforcements. January 15th was now reached, the date at which Aylmer had thought Kut could not hold out any longer, owing to Turkish new arrivals.

Townshend then began to fear for his supplies. He had shut himself up in Kut on the understanding that he was to be relieved in a month or a little more, and the siege had lasted six weeks already! The Relief Force had fought two indecisive actions, and the British had suffered much more heavily than had been anticipated.

So he began to count up his stores again.

On January 8th there had been rations for British troops for thirty days; for Indian troops, twenty-nine days; grain for eight days only; fodder for seven; tinned meat for eight; meat on hoof for seventeen, and tea for fifteen. And that was seven days ago!

Von der Goltz re-appeared at Kut with a German staff on January 16th, and incidentally nearly got knocked over by a shell! During this time of repeated unsuccessful attempt of relief, Townshend felt more than ever the trying position of a commander of a besieged force, who could do nothing but watch and hope for news. Every evening he used to go through the hospitals and have a chat with the wounded and he always acted as if the news he gave them (generally faked good news) was really true. They used to say to him repeatedly: "You'll get us out of it, won't you, General. We know you will. After getting us out of December 1st you can get us out of anything!" As Townshend says: "They all had such a touching confidence in me. Surely no General ever had such a devoted Division." He always acted as though he were full of good spirits, but it was indeed acting all the time.

Many consultations took place over the wireless between Aylmer and Townshend and between General Headquarters and Aylmer, as to the advisability or the contrary of Townshend trying to break out of Kut. Aylmer was in favour of it. He thought if he and Townshend could by any means join hands all would be well from one point of view, but he would be compelled to leave behind him in Kut most of his stores, destroy all his guns and ammunition and, worst of all, abandon his sick and the men unable to march to the "tender" mercies of the enemy.

Townshend was of course ready to attempt to carry out any plan which might be decided on, but

he did not want to abandon his men and destroy his stores and ammunition till all else failed.

His idea was to fight on from trench to trench and house to house till all the ammunition was spent. Then, and not till then, would he be justified in making terms on fair conditions. As long as he could hold Kut, the enemy was unable to take the offensive towards Amarah. He was also hoping that the end of the wet weather was at hand, and he told Aylmer that if he could not relieve him this time he must retreat and make fresh plans.

He was pleased when the Army Commander decided against the sortie from Kut. He had never wanted to abandon the place and he would hold out as long as humanly possible in the hope that the Authorities would finally decide to send sufficient forces in time for relief.

Preparations were made for another big effort on January 20th, but on the following day Townshend received bad news. The attack on the Turks had been repulsed. Moreover, the Tigris, swollen by the heavy rains, had flooded the front trenches, and the first line of defence had to be abandoned. On this date Townshend decided to put the troops on half rations and lay hands on all the food stuffs in the town, for there were only fourteen days full rations for English and Indian troops, fodder for four days and grain for thirty, and tea for British units for ten days only. Large stores of grain were discovered in the town by a house to house search, and by offering rewards for concealed hoards further supplies were obtained. The well-to-do inhabitants had managed in the usual way of "war hoarders" to hide a great deal. Aylmer suggested that Townshend should make a sortie from Kut to assist him by drawing off some of the enemy, but the latter replied that it was impossible for him to do so: he had only just over 6,000 bayonets as a fighting force,

and must leave a garrison to defend the town, which would certainly be assaulted as soon as the enemy discovered he was attempting a sortie. It would be just as well to abandon the town altogether, for its fall must follow close on any such attempt.

But Aylmer's repeated attacks failed, and it was evident, therefore, that no more could be done till reinforcements reached him. General Nixon had gone home sick, and the command at Basra was now in the hands of Sir Percy Lake, an officer of a very different stamp, who would insist on the sufficiency of the forces and the proper conduct of the operations. Townshend, in his diary, very graphically describes the situation and its causes:—

Every kind of trial, every kind of obstacle is to be met with in that accursed country Mesopotamia. After great exertions, and with an enemy attacking us all the time, we managed to dig ourselves in at Kut. As soon as the defences began to be respectable, and two decisive assaults of the enemy had been repulsed, rain came to swell the river, increase the dreaded floods of the Tigris, and delay and hamper our relief forces. Finally came the floods themselves, to wash us out of our trenches, to force the men to live standing in water up to their knees, and to fill the hospitals with diseases and sickness. What worries, what trials, what anxieties were experienced by me in that siege, no one not there can possibly realise. . .

In the face of the undoubted fact that Aylmer's efforts at relief had failed, at any rate for the present, Townshend had to face the situation entirely from the point of view of his own command. It was January 23rd. Aylmer had said that relief would probably be impossible after the 15th, in view of Turkish reinforcements, and he himself

had bargained to be relieved at latest by the 10th. He considered that he had three alternatives: (1) To endeavour to leave Kut secretly by night and push on towards Aylmer by a desert march of twenty-five miles: in this case, he would have to leave the sick and those unable to march in the town under a Brigadier-General, who would make what terms he could with the enemy. (2) Stay in Kut and prolong the resistance till the last cartridge and the last ounce of food had been consumed. (3) Negotiate with the enemy to preserve his force by handing over Kut to them. In this latter case, he would have to begin negotiations while there was still food. No enemy will discuss terms when starvation has reached the beleaguered garrison.

The first of the three was generally considered the most likely plan. But Townshend pointed out again and again, both to Aylmer and to Lake, that its success depended entirely on luck and on luck alone. The possibility of crossing the river at night without detection was, so to speak, like the spinning of a coin. Aylmer himself, though he realised that the Army Commander probably disagreed with him, thought that he would have very little chance of relieving Kut, even with the reinforcements now on their way to him, and these, indeed, promised to be miserably inadequate.

Townshend realised that his first duty was to save as many men to the Government as possible, but it was a terrible thing for him to contemplate the abandonment, like a thief in the night, of so many wounded and sick men who had trusted him. In his perplexity he said he might try to hold on for yet another two whole months, by which time it would surely be possible to get large quantities of reinforcements from India or even Australia. He consulted earnestly with his Second-in-Command, General Melliss, who was of opinion that the second

course was the best to adopt. He said that by breaking out they could only hope to get 3,000 or 4,000 men away, and this with the maximum amount of luck. That would entail leaving behind to the mercy of the enemy at least 4,000 or 5,000 combatants, besides all the sick and wounded. All the guns would have to be destroyed. The position would be no better than if the Turks had captured the place. His decision was that "the best course and duty to the Empire was to carry on and hold up the Turks." And Townshend finally came round to his opinion also.

Townshend set out his whole reasons for the decision reached by him in consultation with General Melliss in a long telegram to Aylmer, repeated to General Headquarters on January 25th, the chief passages of which may be summarised as follows:—

Not only is breaking out a pure question of chance, a "spin of the coin," owing to the necessity of crossing the river undetected at night, but in case of success I can only extricate some three thousand odd combatants, leaving five thousand behind, exclusive of wounded, sick and all guns. . . .

By so doing, Kut falls at once, allowing the Turks to take the offensive down the Tigris immediately, for so long as I remain at Kut, they cannot get their ships with munitions, stores, etc., past me. . . .

You (*i.e.*, Aylmer) could not remain where you are, or you would share my fate and Nasiriyeh would probably be surrounded and fall. . . . We should thus lose all the territory we have gained by hard fighting. . . .

I have collected additional large quantities of food stuffs, have rationed all the town and can last for eighty-four days more. Great stores of

barley have been discovered, and there are 3,000 animals to feed on. . . .

I am convinced that the best and highest rôle to play is to follow the example of Osman Pasha at Plevna, who held up the Russians and saved Constantinople. Kut will save the whole Basra province and should give the Commander time to get up solid reinforcements and thus save the campaign from disaster. . . .

Aylmer quickly agreed with Townshend's views. He thought that the paragraphs relating to food supplies altered the situation and said that this information, if given before, would have modified his plans. This was most unjust to Townshend (though not meant to be) for he could not have known anything at all about the extra food before he had discovered the hoarded stores of the merchants. Further, it was hardly obligatory to bring up the question of food till it was known definitely whether the relief would be completed by January 10th. Thus it was not easy to see in what way Aylmer's actions would have been modified if he had realised that there were extra supplies of food. As Townshend puts it, tersely enough, in his diary: "The business of a relieving force is to relieve the beleaguered garrison, not prolong the siege." Moreover, the Arab population in Kut was distinctly hostile to the British, and friendly to the Turks. Townshend had searched for arms, but did not want to search the houses of the Arab merchants for food until absolutely obliged.

Matters having thus come to a serious pass, Townshend thought it politic, even necessary, to take the troops more into his confidence. With this intent, he issued another communiqué to the forces in his command. Here it is:—

Our duty stands out plain and simple. It is our

duty to our Empire, and to our beloved King and Country, to stand here and hold up the Turkish Army advance as we are doing now, and with the help of all, heart and soul with me together, we will make the defence one to be remembered in history as a glorious one. All England and India are watching us now, and are proud of the splendid courage and devotion you have shown. . . . I am absolutely calm and confident as to the result. The Turk, though good behind the trench, is of little value in the attack. They have tried it once, and their losses in one night in an attack on the Fort alone were two thousand. They have had also very heavy losses from our musketry and artillery, and I have no doubt that they have had enough.

He went on to inform the garrison that when he was ordered to advance on Ctesiphon he officially demanded an army corps or at least two divisions to perform the task successfully, and had pointed out to Headquarters the grave risk of attempting to do it with one division only.

You know the result and whether I was right or not, and your names will go down to history as the heroes of Ctesiphon. . . . Perhaps, by right, I should not have told you the above. But I feel I owe it to all of you to speak straightly and openly and to take you into my confidence. God knows I have felt our heavy losses, and the sufferings of my poor brave wounded, and I shall remember it as long as I live. I may truly say that no General I know of has been more loyally obeyed and served than I have been in command of the Sixth Division. These words I am afraid are long, but I speak straight from the heart, and you see I have thrown all officialdom overboard. We



will succeed, mark my words. Save your ammunition as if it were gold.

The message had an electrical effect. Townshend had had to convey bad news, but at the same time he had endeavoured to animate the defence by taking all of them into his confidence. To them he was, as always, "Our Charlie." The Brigadier-Generals reported that it had had an excellent effect on the troops. Especially did it raise the morale of the Indian troops. The 7th Rajputs went to their commanding officer, Colonel Parr, and asked him to write to the General. His letter was as follows:—

Dear General Townshend,

My Indian Officers came to me yesterday and said that if you would not think it impertinent of them they would like you to know how pleased the regiment is to receive your communiqué. They say they never had any anxiety about the situation, and would like the General to know that they are with him to the last breath. I told them I was sure you would be pleased to know this.

At the beginning of February, Aylmer began to make preparations for another attempt to relieve the Kut garrison, though several things had occurred which would militate greatly against this second attempt. The Turks had received large reinforcements. On the other hand, the delay in sending an equal amount of fresh troops for the British attacking force was extraordinary and inexplicable. Even the force actually in operation under Aylmer was hampered and could not act or advance with the necessary rapidity, owing to the almost total absence of transport! But General Aylmer did not give up at once. Various plans were concerted between himself and Townshend over the wireless, details of which are to be found in Townshend's own

account of the siege and in official reports. It was a question as to whether the fresh attempt should be made with what troops Aylmer had or could collect from the base at Basra, or whether he should wait for the British divisions said to be coming from Egypt. In the end, the rains and the constantly increasing army of the Turks forced him to decide on an attempt without waiting for the British troops.

Meanwhile, on his side, Townshend was hampered by many circumstances relating to the various religions obtaining among his command. It had been necessary to begin to ration the men on horse-flesh, for which purpose Townshend had had 1,000 animals killed. But the Indians (Hindus and Mohammedans alike) refused to eat horse meat. There were no vegetables beyond the small quantity that could be obtained strictly for the use of the hospital, sown by Townshend early in the siege. In this predicament he asked that the Moulvi at Delhi, and the religious authorities of the Sikhs, Dogras and Rajputs should be asked to grant permission for the eating of meat. This was given by the Mohammedans on the condition that the meat was "hal-aled," that is to say that the animals had their throats cut by the Mohammedan "Halali." The leading Pandit at Delhi simply replied that there was no objection to the Hindus eating meat during the siege.

But if Aylmer's force advanced as a whole, it would have to be fed from Kut, on account of it having no transport to carry its own supplies. It was not easy to see how Townshend could effect this, seeing the enormous difficulties he experienced in feeding his own men. Nevertheless it was decided that Aylmer was to make a "push" on the right bank, and Townshend was to cross the river (somehow or other!) and co-operate with him. The attacking force was to fall upon the Turkish right

flank at a point where there was a redoubt called the "Dujailah Redoubt," and the attack was to be carried out before the flood season could prevent it. His maximum force available consisted of five brigades for which, however, he had transport for food and water for two days only!

He saw no more prospects of getting two more brigades in time, or he would have waited for them.

One or two trifling events had served to raise the spirits of the beleaguered force in Kut. The King, with that forethought and consideration which is one of his chief characteristics, had sent him the following message through the Viceroy:—

I, together with all your fellow countrymen, continue to follow with admiration the gallant fighting of the troops under your command against great odds. Every possible effort is being made to support your splendid resistance.

Another encouraging message was received from General Baratoff, commanding the Russians operating in Asia Minor, saying that Erzeroum had been taken by his troops and that he was moving with his expeditionary force on Kirmanshah.

The Turks had now at least 32,000 men operating against Townshend and Aylmer. They were making strong entrenchments and constructing bridges on the north side of the Hai river. This position on the left bank was at a place called Hannah, which had already been unsuccessfully assaulted by Aylmer. He now thought that before making his principle "push" on the right bank, he would make another attempt at Hannah on the left. Previous experience of the Turks seemed to show that if they were made to "run" on one bank, they would also run on the other! It was thought worth while to make a sortie in support of the attack. Aylmer kept up a continual bombardment on the Hannah position, but it had

no other effect than to make the Turks dig yet deeper into their entrenchments. Townshend says in his diary: "It was like putting salt on a bird's tail, or trying to do so, for they never showed themselves." As he said, guns by themselves never make an enemy quit an entrenched position.

On February 26th, Aylmer informed Townshend what he was going to do, and how he expected Townshend to help him. He would make a slight advance and endeavour to accomplish a flank attack on the south of the Dujailah Redoubt. Townshend was to begin to cross the river only when he could see the turning attack taking effect: for if it did not succeed, his own sortie force would be annihilated, since there would be no means of retreat. The crossing of the Tigris would take at least eight hours to accomplish with the men at his disposal; and, in short, Townshend's co-operation seemed to promise little or no assistance to the attacking force.

Three German monoplanes, bombarding Kut on March 1st, dropped about forty bombs, appearing to direct their aim especially on the hospital, which was a covered-in bazaar with the hospital flags conspicuous on the roof. Townshend writes apropos of this enormity:—

If one of the German pilots had fallen into the hands of my troops he would have been torn to pieces. It was not fear of their bombs for everyone treated the aeroplanes as a joke, running to cover at the last moment with shouts of laughter, but the victims were often the poor wounded in the hospital and it was not possible to mistake the building for anything else.

In one of these bombings, six of the sick were killed outright and twenty-six wounded, of whom fourteen died next day.

The attack had been timed for March 6th,

but on the 4th a telegram was received from Aylmer that there would be a postponement of 24 hours to the 7th. The next day: another wire postponed it again to the 8th! These delays were very unfortunate, giving time to the enemy to continue their construction of trenches and close the gap between the Dujailah Redoubt and the Hai River. The essential point was the capture of the redoubt. To crown all this ill-luck, three Arabs escaped from Kut by swimming the river, and informed the enemy of all the preparations then being made for the crossing. Townshend bitterly remembered his urging Sir Percy Cox to agree to the expulsion of all Arabs from the town. If that had been done, food would have been saved and the chances of espionage decreased. It was making war with kid gloves on, on an enemy who had no scruples of any kind at all.

The attack on the redoubt failed utterly. Though the enemy lost very heavily, they were able to maintain their position by means of continual reinforcements from the left to the right bank. Aylmer sent in a message by aeroplane on March 9th, that the operations terminated in a gallant but unsuccessful attempt on the redoubt and that unless they retired from the right bank, he (Aylmer) would be unable to hold his positions owing to the lack of water, and that he would have to retire to the previous position at Wadi.

A gunner of the Field Artillery who was in Kut has supplied several personal details about the siege and the subsequent sufferings of the men. Here is his letter:—

On our way to Baghdad we were told by a German officer that the first relieving force retired through a great blunder. The Turks and Germans were beaten and retiring in disorder. We in Kut were waiting to move out and smash

them up completely when the relieving force turned about and retired. The Turks rallied and drove them back. The blunder was caused by a regiment of Arabs coming in on the flank to surrender to the British. They were taken to be enemy reinforcements. That blunder cost us much. But the campaign was a series of blunders.

Something had happened which may perhaps never now be cleared up. The failure nearly broke poor Aylmer's heart. He was an old friend of Townshend's, having been with him in 1891 in the Hunza Nagar Campaign, where he won the V.C. for his very gallant feat of blowing in the gate of Fort Nilt. He sent a letter to Townshend by aeroplane from the camp at Wadi under the date of March 12th, 1926.

My dear Townshend,

The War Office say that my conduct of operations has been unfortunate, and have ordered my suspension. I need not tell you how deeply I grieve that I have not been able to relieve you; but I have every confidence that my successor will be able to do so very soon. I have had a harder task than most people realise. It all looks very easy when you sit in an armchair at the W.O.! The business a few days ago very nearly came off. I cannot tell you how much I admire the splendid way in which you are defending Kut. I heartily pray that you will gain your reward in speedy relief. Give my best wishes to Delamain, Melliss and Hamilton. Good-bye and God bless you all, and may you be more fortunate than myself.

Yours ever,

E. G. AYLMER.

A manly letter such as might have been expected from the soldier who wrote it. He made no definite

complaint in the field, but submitted as a good soldier should. Later, however, in his evidence before the members of the Mesopotamian Commission, he told them that he had fought the action on the Wadi against better judgment, acting under orders from his superiors, and, further, that he had proposed another plan which was not accepted by Headquarters.

Townshend replied in a telegram of sympathy, for, as he said: "I knew his heart must be broken."

General Gorringe, who had been operating near Nasiriyeh, was appointed to command the Tigris Corps in succession to Aylmer. He was given the local rank of Lieut-General.

The end was approaching. Khalil Pasha wrote to Townshend a most courteous and even friendly letter in which he pointed out that Aylmer, after six weeks of preparation, resumed the offensive, but was compelled to retreat with 4,000 casualties while the Turks were still left with adequate forces. He went on to say:—

For your part you have heroically fulfilled your military duty. From henceforth I see no likelihood that you will be relieved. Your deserters say that you are without food and that diseases are prevalent among your troops. You are free to continue your resistance at Kut or to surrender to my forces, which are growing larger and larger. Receive, General, the assurance of our highest consideration.

KHALIL.

Governor of Baghdad,  
Commanding Turkish Forces in Irak.

Townshend, almost at his last gasp, replied that, on the contrary, he saw much chance of relief and should not consider the question of surrender. He added thanks for Khalil's courtesy, saying that

he was glad to find again, as he had found at Kut el Amara and Ctesiphon, that the Turk was always a good soldier and a gentleman.

General Gorringe wired on March 17th that every effort would be made to relieve them by the middle of April, and they were all confident that they would win through, but that the force was still hampered by the want of transport.

Meanwhile the enemy's bombardments increased daily, and his aeroplanes began a series of incendiary bombing raids, aiming especially at Headquarters. His troops were largely reinforced on both banks. By March 24th bombardments continued all through the night. The siege had now lasted longer than Ladysmith: the heat was almost unbearable: the sick list was increasing daily. Though the health of the British troops remained fairly good, owing to the horse-meat, scurvy was rife and the stench almost intolerable. Townshend visited the sick daily, and denied himself what small comforts he had for their sakes. A private of the 7th Hussars has told me that while in hospital, weakened from pain and the loss of his leg, Townshend sent him his last bottle of wine out of pure sympathy for his condition, and he added: "So can I also testify to his goodness of heart: I think that bottle of wine saved my life and my gratitude is still felt." Indeed their respect and affection for Townshend amounted to something like superstition, and they were confident up to the last moment that the place would be relieved.

The gunner of the R.F.A. whose letter has already been quoted explains that the sufferings of the horses were indeed dreadful to behold. Fodder running short, they were slowly starving, eating hard ropes and looking at the men with pitiful eyes. On the retirement from Ctesiphon to Kut, the teams kept going without much trouble, and when they



reached Kut the animals seemed to know what was expected of them. They put every ounce of strength into their efforts, and many gun and wagon teams dropped dead in their harness. Afterwards they had to be killed and eaten—a better fate than a lingering death of starvation. The very bones were boiled down for soup, and the men took it in turns to have the bones afterwards! Often a fight would start over an argument as to who had the last bone!

Finally, General Gorringe decided to attempt the relief by the left bank, and the effort was to be made on the morning of April 5th. On that day a violent bombardment was heard in the early morning, and Gorringe carried the first five lines of the Hannah position. At 10 p.m. nothing had been heard of the operations, but early on the 7th a wire informed the besieged that further positions had been carried. From the information given Townshend inferred that the attacking force had been divided into two parts, and was operating on both banks at once.

Hope rose high in Kut. The rupee increased in value with the Arabs, the troops were cheery and glad, and the housetops were covered with spectators watching the smoke of the shells in the distance down the river. It was a curious moment to receive a wire from Headquarters in reference to a telegram from the Secretary of State in London, saying that allegations were being made at home that Townshend had protested formally against the advance on Baghdad with an insufficient force, and asking what he had to say! He had plenty to say, one may be sure, for it was well known that he protested all the time, only going forward at last "in obedience to orders from his superiors."

Authorizations were also forwarded from Headquarters at this critical moment to award Distinguished Conduct Medals and other decorations for the rank and file in all the recent operations, includ-

ing the siege itself, but no honours or rewards for officers had been awarded for Kurna, Kut el Amara, Ctesiphon or the siege, with the exception of one or two subaltern ranks. Perhaps the War Office looked on the relief as a certainty, and thought the rewards would be apropos!

On April 9th the new arrivals, the 13th Division (under General Maude recently arrived from Egypt, who afterwards reached Baghdad with a force of 100,000 men) assaulted the enemy's position at dawn and failed to carry it. Khalil Pasha told Townshend afterwards that the reason of the failure was that the attack had not been carried out in sufficient depth.

The news was bad. There seemed to be no chance of the relief succeeding before April 15th. Townshend therefore reduced the ration to seven ounces of barley, which might give Gorringe two days more and enable them to hold out to the 17th. The enemy was much elated by the repulse of the attack, and, for the first time Townshend had to face the certainty of surrender.

Gorringe was entrenching in front of the enemy's positions. This suited the Turks exactly, for they could dig in much better and much faster than the British. Townshend once more reduced the ration to five ounces of barley meal, and the Indians were given no privileges in their food. With this further reduction, Townshend hoped to hold out to April 21st, though this decrease in food at every check to the relief force had the great advantage of lessening the physical and moral strength of the garrison. He made another appeal to his troops in a personal communiqué in which he told them to help in the question of food stuffs. The result was that the next day the Indians were eating horse-flesh!

One thing was remarkable in all the operations for the relief of Kut. The relieving forces were always

a month late in their plans, and a Division short in their numbers, and too large a force was always allotted to the bank on which the chief attack was NOT to be made! Still efforts went on. On April 10th, Headquarters wired that there was no doubt Gorringe could in time force his way through, but it was extremely doubtful if he could do it by the 15th. Meanwhile it was resolved to try and get some supplies into Kut by ships running the gauntlet at night, and also by aeroplane. This was the first time such a plan had been resorted to in war, but was only a partial success. A certain amount of flour, salt, ghee, atta and other provisions were successfully dropped into Kut, but sometimes into the Tigris by mistake! Anyway the carriage of such heavy weight was not possible for the airmen to manœuvre successfully, and often the sacks of flour burst when reaching the ground.

On the 17th inst., intelligence was received of the capture of the Turkish position at Beir Aiessa. 2,300 Turks were found dead in the trenches, 180 prisoners, including eight Turkish officers, were taken, and seven guns. But the Turks had heavily counter-attacked during the night with 10,000 men and driven the British back by nearly eight hundred yards. The counter-attack was led by German officers, some of whom were among the killed.

Still they hoped on. Gorringe wired early on April 20th: "You can assure all ranks from me their relief will be effected shortly. They must not relax their gallant efforts during the next few days, and I am quite sure you will continue to inspire them with your courageous example."

The attack failed like the others, and the failure was reported to Townshend on April 22nd, with the remark that Gorringe would not relax efforts. Surrender was now in sight. A final effort was made by the contingent of the Royal Navy. The *Julnar*



LIEUTENANT BROOKE-FIRMAN, V.C., R.N. WHO LOST HIS  
LIFE IN A GALLANT ATTEMPT TO LAND SUPPLIES IN  
KUT



attempted to run the blockade at midnight on April 24th-25th, laden with food. She was commanded by a most gallant young officer of the Royal Navy, Lieutenant Brooke-Firman, and carried 270 tons of supplies. The crew were all men of the Royal Navy and the other officers were Lieut-Commander Cowley and Engineer-Lieut. Reed of the R.N.V.R. The plucky effort failed, for the *Julnar* was discovered by the enemy soon after leaving Felahieh and shelled all the way. At Magasis the Turks had stretched a chain across the river which fouled her screw. Under a terrific fire of musketry she was diverted on to the bank. The gallant young officer, Brooke-Firman, was killed on the bridge, and all his crew, including five wounded, were made prisoners. Cowley was supposed to have died of wounds, but there is little doubt that he was murdered by the enemy. Firman and Cowley were both posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for their gallantry.

No more could be done. In Kut twenty men were actually dying daily of starvation. Townshend was of opinion that it was the business of the relief force to open negotiations with Khalil Pasha, but the Army Commander decided that it would be better done by Townshend himself. With reference to this he writes:—

Had I had any food I would have absolutely declined to negotiate on the ground that it was not my business. But I had to get food at once or all my men would lie down and die.

Thus ends this heroic chapter in Townshend's life of service to his country.

## CHAPTER XXI

### TURKEY: A PRISONER

GENERAL KHALIL PASHA received the first overtures from the British on April 26th, 1916. The Turkish Commander at once said that he was most anxious that the garrison should be well rationed, and he allowed two barges loaded with a day and half's rations to pass up the river to Kut. The negotiations over the exchange of prisoners were soon so far satisfactory that a hospital ship, another British ship and two big barges laden with food were admitted to the garrison. In a very short time they returned down stream with 777 sick and wounded.

Previously in a letter to Khalil Pasha, Townshend had asked for an armistice of ten days for facilities to procure provisions at once for his troops and also for the six thousand civil inhabitants of Kut, and for permission to transport the troops under parole to India or elsewhere on the undertaking that they would take no further part in the war.

Khalil Pasha, in his reply, promised food for the troops and transport for them to Baghdad and for Townshend himself the warmest welcome in Constantinople. He concluded by appointing a meeting at a point where a white flag had been hoisted.

In the meantime, Townshend wrote the following personal letter to Headquarters eloquent of his bitterness of mind:—

April 27th. I meet Khalil about 10 a.m. Hope to arrange satisfactory preliminaries—*i.e.*, six days' armistice, you to send up food at once. Hope

to arrive at rough understanding we are to go free. Shall also propose Khalil negotiates with your Headquarters for regulating details, etc. It is impossible to do so here. Had this begun at your Headquarters yesterday, our food would be arriving by now. I am ill in body, in mind, and is it to be surprised at? Remember the great strain I have been under so far back as Kurna: all responsibility, with entire conduct of operations, without a single order ever having been given to me, and with not a word of praise or reward. I have had my share of responsibility and I consider you should conduct these operations. Truly it is not encouraging to read the unjust and unfair way my Kurna operations have been treated as compared with Nasiriyeh.

All through that day and the next negotiations continued with Enver Pasha, more German than Turk, German trained and surrounded by a German staff. Thus there was no possible hope of terms. Townshend was actually empowered to offer as much as one million pounds sterling to the Turks, and to leave his arms and munitions in Kut intact if they were allowed to go free on parole. Enver's reply came through on the 28th: "Unconditional surrender." He said they did not want money at all, they wanted the surrender of the whole garrison of Kut, the arms, ammunition and stores, before any further arrangements were made as to disposal of sick and wounded. But, as a personal appreciation of what Townshend had done in the defence, he would be allowed to leave for India, on parole not to bear arms against Turkey for the remainder of the war. But this favour was for him alone. He wrote to Headquarters:—

. . . my duty seems clear, to go into captivity with my force, though I know the hot weather will



kill me, for the continuous strain I have suffered since August till now is more than I can bear. . . .

He would not accept his personal liberty and allow his comrades to be taken into captivity. It has been insinuated that he deserted his whole force, and lived at ease in Constantinople. Those who make this accusation should ask themselves if he had any choice. Is it supposed that Khalil Pasha or Enver said to him: "Which would you like to do—go with your troops, or go to Stamboul?" What his answer would have been in such a case is indicated by his refusal to accept his liberty on parole. Of course, he refused, and of course Enver brought him to Constantinople to parade him in captivity before the Turkish populace. It was too great a triumph for Enver to miss!

He burned the tattered Union Jack, which he had kept flying for five months; destroyed all the guns, material, ammunition; cut up the saddlery and all equipment; threw the bolts of the rifles into the river, and then gave up the town into the hands of a Turkish battalion. A final message was sent to Headquarters that he was about to do so, and then as a last act he destroyed the wireless installation. He offered his sword and pistols to Khalil Pasha who, however, shook hands with him cordially and returned the weapons at once, saying that they were his by right, as much as they had ever been.

"Spot," the terrier, who had been in all the battles and had killed many cats in Kut, went down the stream in the hospital ship and was handed over to Sir Wilfred Peek at Basra. Another faithful beast, the dog belonging to General Melliss, accompanied Spot home.

A launch lay in readiness to take Townshend to Baghdad, and with him went Captain Morland, his A.D.C., Lieut.-Colonel Parr of the Divisional Staff

(who was a sick man), an Indian servant, two British orderlies and his Portuguese cook. The troops released from Kut were in camp at Shumran near by: they were in a bad state, nearly famished. Khalil Pasha allowed them plenty of food, and eight of the men actually died of over-eating, being unable to restrain themselves. The launch stopped at the camp where the British troops were collected, and Townshend was able to say "au revoir" to General Delamain, General Hamilton, Colonel Evans and a crowd of officers and men there to greet him. In his diary he writes:—

Officers and men lined the bank as we passed the place where the remnants of the gallant Sixth Division were encamped, and cheered me long as I went by. I shall never forget that cheer. Tears filled my eyes as I stood to attention at the salute. Never shall I have such a command again. I loved the Sixth Division with all my heart.

Before continuing with the story of the captivity in Turkey an extract from the speech of Lord Kitchener in the House of Lords on May 4th, 1916, may well be quoted. In answer to a question by Townshend's friend, "Charlie" Beresford, in the House of Commons, the Secretary of State for War replied in a long and impressive speech, in the course of which he said:

. . . General Townshend and his troops in their honourable captivity will have the satisfaction of knowing that in the opinion of their comrades, which I think I may say this house and the country fully share, they did all that was humanly possible to resist to the last, and that their surrender reflects no discredit on themselves or on the record of the British and Indian Armies. . . . I am sure those who held and those who strained

every nerve to relieve Kut have alike earned our admiration and our gratitude.

On arrival at Baghdad, Townshend was to have had Von der Goltz's house, presumably the best in the town. But the German Field-Marshal had died of typhus there, and Townshend was lodged in the house of the Italian Consulate. It was generally believed that Von der Goltz had been poisoned by the Turks. He had sworn to take Townshend alive, but he went first.

Enver Pasha was also expected in Baghdad. This raised hopes in Townshend that some sort of arrangement might be made to "parole" all his troops. He was told by the officer in charge of him that he was at liberty to go to Constantinople when he liked, but with the thought of his men in captivity ever present in his mind, he first wrote to Khalil Pasha to ask if there were no chance of arranging parole for them, that they might be sent to India.

It was arranged that Townshend should see Khalil on the next day and then proceed to Constantinople, accompanied by his A.D.C., Captain Morland. The Pasha was very courteous to him and gave a dinner party in his honour. Among the guests was Sven Hedin, the Swedish explorer, whom Townshend had known in Simla, 1908, and whom Kitchener and the Viceroy had made much of. He had always been splendidly treated by the British, but during the War he lost no opportunity of being with the German armies, and showing his sympathy for them. I suppose he thought he was on the winning side.

The first part of the journey was by rail to Samarra (then the rail head) and from there they went by road (in a victoria!) *via* Tekrit, reaching Mosul on May 19th. On the way they passed the

survivors of the ill-fated *Julnar* under the command of Sub-Lieutenant Reid, R.N.R. Reid told him that they had been very harshly treated and made to pay for their own donkey hire, though some of the party were ill. All Townshend could do was to give him some fifteen pounds to help in these payments.

The journey from Baghdad to Constantinople is about 1,255 miles, *via* Mosul, Ras-el-Ain, Aleppo, Tarsus, over the Taurus mountains, and then *via* Konia and Kara Hissar to Constantinople. The railhead of this section from Aleppo was at Ras-el-Ain, the unfinished gap being from there to Samarra on the Baghdad section. There were other gaps after passing Aleppo which were all passed in motor lorries.

At Aleppo Townshend's party was met by a number of Turkish officers and gendarmerie, who were drawn up on the platform to salute him. They remained at Aleppo four whole days, leaving on May 29th, and travelling (when not on the railway) in large German motor lorries with German chauffeurs. The German officer in charge of the motor transport tried to get into the car with Townshend, but Isakh Bey, the Turkish officer in charge, would not permit this and the German was reminded that he was not in a position to give orders.

At Bozanti, where the railway was reached again, Enver's private train was drawn up and he sent for Townshend to go and talk to him in his saloon. Townshend describes the interview in his diary:—

. . . He spoke in very flattering terms of the defence of Kut, and in my ability in advancing nearly to Baghdad with what he called "*une poignée d'hommes*." He said I should be the honoured guest of his nation, which appreciated the way I had done my duty to my country. I

reminded him of his offer to me in a telegram to go home on parole, if I did not destroy my guns. I told him that it was impossible for me to purchase my liberty in that way, and so I had destroyed them and now I hoped he would allow me to be exchanged and go to England. He said that perhaps it would be done; he would see. He said that I must not grieve at being a prisoner, it was the fortune of war. . . . He said he would see me on my arrival at Constantinople, as he was on his way there, and shaking hands cordially with me, ended the interview. A large staff of German and Austrian officers were with him, and as I walked along the train many of them saluted me; others snapshotting me with Kodaks. . . .

Of course, it was all talk on Enver's part. None knew better than he that Townshend could not be released on parole. He laid the blame on the Germans, saying his "allies had to be consulted." If the Germans had been asked, they would have said it was the Turks! It reminds one of Spenlow and Jorkins in *David Copperfield*. But it was, of course, the Germans. Though Townshend noticed that all the rolling stock of the railways was Belgian, that all the trucks were marked "Brussels," and the directions on them in French—the locomotives were German, as also were the engine-drivers, stokers and guards.

By a curious coincidence the coffin of the German Field-Marshal Von der Goltz travelled by the same train—the dead conqueror and the living conquered!

The journey from Baghdad had been quick, lasting only twenty-two days instead of the usual month. On the platform were the General Officer Commanding the first Turkish Army, his staff, and many Turkish War Office officials. Isakh Bey, who had

been with him on the journey and a Turkish naval attaché, Tewfik Bey, specially attached to Townshend during his captivity, introduced him to all the officers, and he held a sort of reception in the waiting room of the station.

He and Morland, with their captors, were driven through the streets of the city in open landaus, with mounted armed guards and the mob crowding the streets. A great day of triumph for the Turks and Germans, and a very bitter moment for Townshend.

A house had been taken on the island of Halki for the use of Townshend and his party during their imprisonment with the Turks. Halki is one of the group known as Prince's Islands, opposite Constantinople and in full view of its palaces and minarets. The Naval School is on Halki, and several private villas of the more wealthy class of Constantinople, as well as a few bijou residences where "houris" of various degrees of social standing kept house and entertained their "gentlemen friends" of all nationalities.

Later in the year, Townshend and Morland were removed from Halki, which had become too cold, to another island of the same group, named Prinkipo, in after years to be the meeting place of many ministers and the scene of the signature of a treaty. They were allotted the summer residence of the British Consul, a house looking like a country vicarage and having a charming garden.

At this time he was astonished and much upset to receive a copy of an illustrated London paper, announcing the birth of a son to the Marchioness Townshend, after eleven years of childless marriage. Thus was the other great ambition of his life frustrated—the ambition of restoring to the name of Townshend the pre-eminence in military circles which it had held in the eighteenth century.

Another interview with the wily Enver followed.

Townshend told him in confidence why he wanted to go home, and Enver said he would ask the Sultan to grant the necessary permission on condition that he took no further part in the war. On the strength of this Townshend wrote off to his wife and daughter and to all his intimate friends that he was probably coming home in a very short time!

But Enver never intended to let him go. He was too valuable as a possible hostage in any future negotiations with the British. Refusal was made on the grounds that the Sultan was so incensed with what the British had been doing in Arabia near the sacred Mecca that he would not hear of it.

The King of Spain about this time permitted the Spanish Ambassador at Constantinople to help Townshend in any way possible to get to Spain, and the Ambassador undertook to represent to the Sublime Porte that H.M. the King of Spain hoped General Townshend might be permitted to live on parole in Spain. Enver Pasha having gone on a trip to Berlin, the answer was long delayed.

His wife never ceased to write him encouraging letters, telling him how he was adored by all the troops who had served with him and equally by those who had never seen him. In one letter she tells him of a visit to St. Mark's Hospital, where she had heard that there were some blind soldiers from Kut. She found none from Kut, but was told to interview a soldier who was blinded in both eyes:—

. . . I spoke to a poor young fellow who had lost both his eyes and both arms, and when I told him who I was, his poor face brightened up and he said: "General Townshend, what a fine man, and nobody need say anything about him for we all know what he is!" Then he enquired how you were, and I could not keep back my emotion when

he said: "All is well as long as he is well!" Wasn't it splendid, for he did not know you. He had been wounded in France three weeks ago. And that is what they think of you throughout the army.

The letter then went on to warn him as to what he said to people and what he put in his letters. She knew his anguish of mind and also his indiscreet way of talking and writing too much, so struck a warning note:—

Beware of your enemies at home. The slightest word or jest may be distorted by them. Your powerful friends (and you have many) are taking the greatest care of you. Take care of yourself. I tremble to think that in your captivity you might harm yourself when you have done so brilliantly on active service. I think of you day and night and nothing escapes my watchful eye in your interest. . . .

Izzet Pasha was uniformly kind and hospitable to him. He records one occasion when he lunched with him at his house at Therapia. The Princess, his wife, was of course not seen as she lived strictly behind the veil, but she sent many messages to Mrs. Townshend and her mother, whom she had known well in Egypt. This friendship with Izzet was to be of much service to Townshend in later days. The Pasha told him that if it had not been for the Germans, he would have been home long ago.

The request to live in Spain was refused, the excuse being that, although Turkish officials professed a great personal liking for Townshend, there were many difficulties in letting him go. It was said that the British in Cairo were parading their Turkish prisoners to be jeered at by the mob, though it need scarcely be said that there was not the slightest foundation for such an accusation.



Tewfik seems to have been most anxious to make his captivity as little unpleasant as possible. He tried to invent all sorts of diversions for him, and once took him to a Greek dance in a café close to the house. It was a low sort of gathering, the men in straw hats and in their shirt sleeves capering about with their women and little girls of fourteen. But if it had the effect of making the unhappy Englishman laugh a bit, it served its purpose.

Townshend worked daily for the relief of the British prisoners of war who had been in Kut. Philip of the American Embassy helped him all he could and the Government of the United States (or perhaps the American people) were most generous in sending warm clothing, which was despatched to the various prison centres in large bales at frequent intervals. Townshend himself had to work with Philip more or less secretly in the matter for fear of being forbidden the Embassy, but with the help of Tewfik Bey he managed to effect a good deal.

One of his correspondents cheered him up at this time with a kind letter. This was Mrs. Maule, widow of Colonel Maule, R.F.A., who had been Townshend's C.R.A. She wrote:—

Dear General Townshend,

I want you to know what a comfort it has been to me to know all through these long months that my husband was under you. He wrote on December 3rd, "Remember, dearest, I am with Townshend" and I have remembered. You are magnificent. No man could do what you have done. I am proud my husband has been under you. You will always be our beloved General. God bless you and keep you safe. There is no one like you. Forgive my writing, but I wanted you to know how we wives love you and pray for you.

KITTY MAULE.



TOWNSHEND A PRISONER IN PRINKIPO WITH COLONEL MOORLAND  
HIS A.D.C. TEWFIK BEY IS ON THE RIGHT OF THE PICTURE



In *The Times* of October 16th he was gazetted K.C.B. As he said: "I don't suppose anyone will grudge me my K.C.B. after 35 years' service in nine campaigns, and nine times mentioned in despatches. It has not been awarded *too* soon!"

Meanwhile, Townshend determined to try and escape from Prinkipo. No easy matter, when there was a police station next door to his house. But he felt perfectly justified in escaping if he could, since he would give no parole, and his diary tells how he set about it.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE END OF THE CAPTIVITY

THE difficulties of escape were enormous. They must either fly by aeroplane, and so avoid the mines in the Dardanelles, or else endeavour to get down the coast to some port nearer the Straits, make their way across country to Mitylene, or an outlet on the Mediterranean coast of Asia Minor, and there try to get into touch with the British Naval Forces. Panderma, a port on the Sea of Marmora, was indicated as one point to which they could direct their boat. The railway connected it with Smyrna, and once at that place it might be possible to communicate with the British Fleet.

Their first idea was, however, to escape in a seaplane from some point (offering large bribes) near Halki or Prinkipo. Any scheme of escape would involve sending news of their plans to the British, and so it was necessary to trust Turkish agents, and of course to pay out (or guarantee) large sums of money.

The first steps were taken in June, 1918. Townshend found means by which a letter could be sent to the British (but not through the post). Owing to some mismanagement, this was received too late. The messenger was shot down, not by the Turks, but by the Greeks at Chios, and drowned. The body was recovered with the letter, but, instead of sending it to the British Admiral, they sent it to Athens, and it eventually reached the British Fleet Headquarters at Lemnos, two days before the date that Townshend had fixed. There was no seaplane at Lemnos capable of doing the job, and no time to get

one from England. Hence the non-arrival. But the prisoners knew nothing of all this until they reached Lemnos.

In his letter which was thus delayed, Townshend asked for a seaplane to take him and Morland away.

It was arranged that Niandro, a little island near the southern-most point of Prinkipo, would be a convenient starting place. Townshend wrote to the British officer commanding at Mitylene that he and Morland would be close to this point from midnight to 2 a.m. on the following nights:—In July, 22nd/23rd, 26th/27th, 28th/29th; and in August, 21st/22nd, 24th/25th, and 27th/28th. The alternate dates would allow for possible breakdowns and errors. It was begged that the earliest dates possible would be chosen. The big sum of money promised was mentioned to show how determined they were to escape. He also enclosed a letter addressed to Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, First Lord of the Admiralty, who had been one of the Relief Party that tried to get through to Kut. Stipulations were made that any agent employed should be well treated, and separated from other Turkish prisoners (for, of course, he would be in the position of a prisoner). When all was over Townshend was to make all the arrangements necessary to get him away safely to some neutral country.

The man was to find an opportunity of starting in the next few days, but he said if he had not started on his flight by July 10th, Townshend was to know that the attempt would not be till August 21st/22nd. He was very anxious that no suspicion should attach to his family in Turkey. In any case he promised to let the prisoners know somehow when it was to be.

They heard that he had got away on July 13th, but had been brought down by British shell fire, his aeroplane falling into the sea. They could not be

certain whether he had been really brought down, or only acted the business. Two fishermen had seen a British launch go up to the sinking aeroplane, but the question remained, was he dead or alive? If dead, the letter from Townshend would be found, and most probably reach its destination. So he and Morland decided that they would be at the rendezvous on all dates as arranged, in case the seaplane arrived. The story is told in the diary:—

... So on the night of July 22nd/23rd we managed to leave the house and row off in a little boat unobserved. We waited at the rendezvous till quite 2 a.m. It was a beautiful night—moonlight and no wind. Nothing was seen. So there was nothing to be done but creep back to Prinkipo, which we reached without having been discovered. . . . The next thing we heard was that a British aeroplane had fallen in the Dardanelles. It was reported that it was our man and an observer, that they were all right and not at all injured, so we concluded that August 21st/22nd would be the fateful day. . . .

At that time, Tewfik Bey was no longer with them. He was succeeded by two young officers, Hussein Bey and Sedad Bey, younger men, who each took duty for a fortnight at a time, and whom Townshend did not know (and consequently did not trust) so thoroughly. They were by no means in their confidence: it was therefore considered more prudent to put the one on duty to sleep before they started for the rendezvous for the second time. Remembering Grossmith in the "Spring Chicken" at the Gaiety (how like Townshend to remember the Gaiety and Grossmith at such a moment!) they managed to convey a sleeping powder into his mulligatawny soup! It succeeded. The A.D.C. (it was Hussein Bey) went fast asleep, and was soon snoring loudly,

and thus they found him on their return! There had been a furious fusillade from Constantinople directed against some British aeroplanes on the previous night, but nothing was heard of any attack on that particular evening.

It was the most perfect night I have ever seen. The sea like a sheet of glass; bright moonlight and not a breath of air. We got away softly, launched the boat, pulled away, and at 11.15 p.m. were at the Niandro rendezvous. At 11.20 to our astonishment we heard the engine of an aeroplane and thought ours must have arrived before the appointed time. Then the sound died away, and we saw a tremendous fusillade stretching from San Stefano up the Bosphorus beyond Pera. We hoped vainly that while this "diversion" was going on our plane would arrive to pick us up, but not a bit of it! The firing continued for half an hour, then died away. We waited till 2.15 a.m. and then sadly rowed away home. We had heard an engine again a little while before two, which seemed as if the aeroplane sent to save us had come down in error, possibly at Bulwer's Island, west of Halki, in mistake for Niandro. But it was not likely. The man would have seen his error, as it was so light, and it would not have been easy to make such a mistake. We had also sent a sketch with the letter to the S.N.O. made from the British Admiralty chart. Still, there was the engine heard at 11.20 and again at 1.50 to be accounted for.

It was nothing short of a miracle that Townshend's absence had not been noticed: but thanks to the mulligatawny soup, the young Turkish officer had snored comfortably through it all! They made another attempt on the night of August 24th/25th, but with a feeling of little hope. They got away



quietly, reached the rendezvous once more successfully, waited the agreed time and once more returned, as Townshend said, "in a feeling of exasperation against my own people." He supposed that the letter had reached the O.C. Mitylene all right, and was asking himself why they had not made an attempt to rescue them. Or was it that the authorities at home had positively forbidden the seaplane to risk the adventure? He could not forget that Lord Derby (then Minister of War) had written that they could not help him any more than anyone else. So they came to the conclusion that it would be no use to try that way again, but must now rely on their own efforts. The distance to be traversed was about 221 miles there and back, and if the weights of him and Morland added to that of the pilot made too big a total, why not two seaplanes?

British planes continued to bombard Constantinople and San Stefano every night—and both Townshend and Morland did not think it would be any good to risk detection on the night of August 29th/30th. If the British seaplanes had not been able to carry out the scheme on the two preceding fixed dates, which were perfect as regards the weather, it was hardly worth while to expect them when conditions were not so favourable.

Nevertheless, they did not give up all hope of escape. They had another iron in the fire. This was nothing less than a hope to reach Panderma on the coast of Marmora, but it was never more than a hope! Townshend built much on it, but greatly to his wrath Morland threw cold water on the whole scheme. He could see that Townshend was persuading himself against his better judgment. The idea was that they were to be put into touch with a certain Circassian brigand who haunted the Panderma district. An old Turkish Admiralty launch was to be employed which would take them to Pan-

derma and the bold brigand would then get them over to the Mediterranean coast and find a sailing boat to take them to the nearest island. It was a mad scheme and possibly their Turkish helper could never have done what he promised. And even if they had got the Turkish launch and found the friendly brigand, there was no boat of any sort on the Mediterranean coast, as they had all been destroyed by the Turks early in the war!

On one occasion Sedad Bey had noticed their absence at night, but this had been explained away as a midnight expedition of gallantry. The young Turk fully believed this explanation, and may have passed the news on, for false rumours of a similar nature certainly reached home, and were made the most of by Townshend's enemies.

In this suspense as regards their escape, Townshend and Morland devoured every bit of news in all the newspapers they could lay their hands on. It appeared that both the Germans and Austrians were trying to arrange the *pourparlers* for a peace, for their overwhelming defeat was now plainly in sight. So, with the possible prospects of the Turks making peace, and therefore setting Townshend and Morland free of their own will, it seems that the attempts to escape were not prosecuted so vigorously. They heard that "X" (the "agent") was dead, which might account for the non-arrival of the seaplane, and they had great doubt as to whether the brigands who were to aid them in the alternative plan of escape, *via* Panderma to the Mediterranean coast, would keep faith or not. These brigands were a band of an army of robbers, amounting to 300,000 in all, who prowled the country, preventing all order, sacking the towns, and levying money from the local authorities. In September, the town of Panderma (the very place which Townshend wished to reach) was sacked by a band who burned

60,000 pounds worth of lira notes at the Municipal Hall, because they did not think paper money had any value! To show also the different feelings entertained by the Turkish people towards their allies, German officers were stripped naked and severely beaten, while Austrians were not touched. This formidable little army of brigands likewise menaced Talaat Pasha, the head of the Government, and told him that if he did not make peace, they would march on Constantinople and sack it.

Townshend, then, through a "friendly" Turk, sent a long communication to the British Naval Authorities at Mitylene, dated October 1st, 1918, and couched in the following terms:—

From General Sir Charles Townshend, to S.N.O.—or Commandant—Mitylene, Imbros, etc., etc.

1. I hope to put a plan of escape into execution on or about October 6th to 8th, and in that case should arrive on the coast opposite the north shore of the island of MITYLENE about October 10th or 12th, that is, if I am not obliged to hide on the way across country, from the gulf of ARTAKI on the Sea of Marmora, *via* Mount Ida, to the coast. I expect to have an escort of brigands and shall be accompanied by Captain Morland.

2. I am sending this message by an aviator who will start not later than two days after I have started, and so will be able to give you approximate date of my arrival on the coast opposite the north shore of MITYLENE. I beg you to assist me in my escape by sending a launch or boats to watch the section of above-named coast, say, on a front of ten miles from BABA BURUN westward. I have shaded the section of the coast red in the accompanying sketch map.

3. I reckon on doing the run from Prinkipo to the gulf of ARTAKI in ten hours, and the run across country to the coast-line west of Mount IDA, some ninety miles, in three days marching. Thus, supposing I leave here on October 7th, I shall, if all goes well, be on the indicated coast on the night of October 10th/11th.

4. I hope by previous reconnaissance and by having an escort not to be delayed on my march.

5. On arriving on the indicated coast line in the daytime, we would send up three smoke fires to proclaim our presence: at night, we would light three fires as near shore as possible to where we were, and hope that your boat would come in as soon as darkness had set in, for delay would mean more danger.

6. I hope, by means of the brigands, to find a boat concealed by fishermen, but of course that is doubtful.

7. I trust that the two aviators that go with this message will be well treated, as I asked for the former aviator, who went in July with a plan for my escape by seaplane.

8. How that plan failed, I am at a loss to understand. I *know* that the aviator reached you safely.

I need not speak of my misery of mind after my two and a half years of mental misery to have to conclude that the seaplane would not arrive. Naturally I did not again risk discovery by attending the rendezvous on the third date (August 27th/28th) as discovery would cause me to be closely interned and destroy all hope of escape. I had begged you to send on the first date and gave my reasons. . . . I beg and trust you will do all in your power to assist me in this present plan of escape to Mitylene. Kindly send a copy of this letter to Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss at the

Admiralty with a request from me that he will forward a copy to my wife who would be anxious on my behalf and would know I am determined to escape. . . .

But it is ever a case of *L'homme propose, Dieu dispose*. If Townshend had only known he was within a few weeks of freedom, he would not have elaborated the plans of the launch and the brigands. For before it could be definitely fixed, the situation had changed. On October 7th, Enver, Talaat and the whole of the Ministry had resigned, and the Sultan had sent for Tewfik Pasha and Marshal Izzet Pasha to form a new Ministry. State affairs, however, move more slowly in the Orient than with us. It was not till the 12th that Townshend was informed that Izzet was to be Grand Vizier and War Minister.

Then he took the bull by the horns and wrote to Izzet, suggesting an interview without delay. He also sent a letter to Reouf Bey, the newly-appointed Minister of Marine, to the effect that he was willing to negotiate with the British Government, but that his condition was his personal liberty before he did anything. The letter to Reouf Bey went by the hand of Tewfik Bey, who had originally introduced him to Reouf. All that Townshend had done during his captivity to make friends with the enemies of Enver and Talaat was now to bear fruit.

Not till four days afterwards, October 16th, did Tewfik bring Townshend a message from Izzet Pasha that he would see him next day.

At the interview Izzet was cordiality itself. At the outset of the conversation he said: "Then you are willing to help us?" And Townshend replied: "With all my heart." After that all was easy. The Grand Vizier avowed that his one object was to save his country from ruin. He remembered what England

had done for Turkey in the Crimea, and he said he came of a family that had always respected England. It was a crime, he said, for Turkey to have made war on England, and he referred bitterly to the Enver party who, led by the Germans, had induced them to do so.

Izzet was ready to send Townshend at once to treat with the British authorities at Mitylene. He gave him his liberty forthwith. Moreover, he made no special conditions for Turkey, but left it in Townshend's hands to do the best for them that he could.

He asked when I should be ready to start. I replied at once, that there was not a moment to be lost, since the British fleet were even then concentrating at Lemnos and might advance up the Dardanelles at any moment. . . . He said he could not send me by the Dardanelles as there were many German officers there, and he wanted to do it without letting them know. His predecessors had delivered Turkey into the hands of the Germans and they were everywhere. He thought the way by Smyrna the best. Reouf Bey the Minister of Marine, and perhaps another Minister would see me at Prinkipo that night, and complete arrangements. . . . As I returned to Prinkipo I reflected how strangely I had been instrumental in accomplishing by diplomacy the object I had been unable to accomplish when sent with a handful of men to take Baghdad. . . . I was now free, nor had I forgotten my gallant men in captivity, for I stipulated for their freedom first of all. Izzet had agreed at once.

Reouf Bey visited him at Prinkipo, and discussed Turkey's armistice conditions. He said Turkey wanted to be friends with England and enjoy her protection, that England should stop active opera-

tions at once, and that the financial, political, and industrial independence of Turkey should be assured. There was no time to be lost. The Germans were trying hard to foment civil war between the two political parties in Constantinople.

After a two hours' conference, it was arranged that a steam yacht, belonging to Rahmy Bey, the Governor of Smyrna, would pick up the party at Prinkipo in the channel between the Andigoni Islands and Halki. Townshend and his staff would be landed at Panderma, and a special train would take them to Smyrna, whence they could easily be transferred to Chios, where the British fleet lay. In any case the fleet was to be prevented from trying to force the passage of the Dardanelles, for that would cause chaos in Constantinople, and then anything might happen. Reouf concluded by saying:—

The whole thing must be *un fait accompli* before it can be talked about. If we want help we will call on the British and open the Dardanelles. Leave us alone till then. Treat us like gentlemen and we will be loyal. . . .

On October 18th, Townshend, now a free man once more, rowed off to the channel between Halki and Prinkipo, accompanied by Morland, Tewfik Bey, two British orderlies and his Indian servant, Simon. Rahmy Bey picked up the party on his yacht, and by 6 p.m. they were at the port of Panderma. The special train of the Governor of Smyrna was awaiting them, and they reached that city at midday on October 19th. The whole place turned out to see Rahmy Bey, the Governor: the streets were crowded, and the people greeted the car with acclamations and cheers. Mr. Whittal, an English inhabitant of the town, said that all Smyrna knew Townshend was coming, and they knew it

meant peace. It was a proud moment for Townshend, and one which he appreciated to the full.

On the way to lunch at Mr. Whittal's, they met Captain Munday, of the Oxford and Bucks, who was a prisoner at a camp close by, and he was permitted to go with them.

. . . At 2 p.m. I was to start in a Government tug, but owing to delays about the baggage it was not until 3.30 that we got under way, proceeding down the Gulf of Smyrna and shaping a course for Mitylene, where we expected to find a British warship. As I was not going to risk being stopped by the Germans, I insisted on trying to pass through the mine-field at night, since there was a fine moon and the sea was like a mill-pond. The Turkish naval officer in charge of the tug remonstrated, saying: "But, Your Excellency, there are loose mines floating about, and if we touch a mine and you are injured, I shall be tried by Court Martial." I replied that neither he nor I would know much about it if we did touch one, so we would take the risk. We passed through five lines of mines.

*Oct. 20.* At 3 a.m. we arrived at the harbour of Mitylene town, not having seen a vessel. After whistling twice, a motor-boat came off with a British naval officer, who hailed us.

"Who are you?"

I called out: "General Townshend!"

He flashed an electric torch into my face and called out: "Good God! I am glad to see you, sir."

I am once more under the British flag.

Townshend at once wired to the Admiral Commanding the Fleet, asking him to send a fast vessel to take him to the flagship: also to Admiral Wemyss



in London, to tell his wife that he was liberated and on the way to London: and a similar wire to the Secretary of State at the War Office. He embarked on board the destroyer *Forester*, the crew of which called out: "Three cheers for General Townshend." The crew of the monitor in harbour lined the decks and cheered him long and loudly, and the hearty welcome touched the embittered man profoundly. At any rate the rank and file of both the services appreciated what he had done.

He arrived at Mudros at 3 p.m., and went at once on board the Admiral's ship, where Admiral the Hon. Sir Arthur Calthorpe (C.-in-C. in the Mediterranean) and Rear-Admiral Sir Michael Culme-Seymour gave him a hearty welcome. He remained with the fleet as the guest of the Admiral, and the Turkish delegates were quartered on the *Agamemnon*.

There is not much to add to this part of the story. On October 30th, the armistice with Great Britain and her Allies was signed at night aboard the *Agamemnon*. At 11 p.m. Townshend received a message from Reouf Bey asking to see him at once. At first he thought that some hitch had occurred, but he found the armistice signed, and all the delegates, British and Turkish were delighted.

Reouf Bey nearly shook my hand off, saying: "Turkey will never be able sufficiently to show her gratitude to you for having made peace possible, and we only ask you to visit Constantinople and bring Lady Townshend with you." He also asked me, privately, to see Lord Curzon and tell him that Turkey could be counted on as a faithful ally of England. . . .

Without any undue self-recommendation, Townshend may undoubtedly claim for himself that he was the primary means of making possible a speedy

armistice with Turkey, which in itself precipitated the signature of the greater Armistice between the Allies and Germany, and in view of the fact that every day and every hour by which this was postponed meant the loss of many lives, he may well count this as not the least of his services during the War. At any rate, if it had not been for him, the world might not have achieved peace by November 11th, 1918.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### ENGLAND : AFTER THE WAR

AFTER the arrangements of the armistice with the Turkish Government had been completed, Townshend embarked on board H.M.S. *Forward* and reached Rome on November 3rd. Here he heard that Austria had followed the example of Turkey and had sued for peace.

In Paris he was met by his wife, and stayed for a few days to see his many friends in France. Clemenceau, "The Tiger," was especially glad to see him, congratulated him most warmly on what he had done, and told him that there was no doubt, by inducing Turkey to come out of the war, he had been instrumental in saving millions of pounds and thousands of lives. During this interview, the French Minister showed him a telegram which had just arrived from the Boches, asking if they could pass through the French lines to arrange an armistice.

In France his welcome had been most hearty by officials and non-officials alike. In England, only his personal friends made any fuss about his return. At Victoria, Lord Beresford's car was waiting for him, and several friends. But the official world made no sign.

At the theatre that evening one of the actors indicated that the General was present in a box. The whole house rose to its feet, and cheered him long and vociferously, so that the performance had to be stopped till he had made an acknowledgment of their welcome. After the show he had to be got out privately by a side door, or he would have been mobbed by the crowd waiting for him.

Townshend was never a man to sit down under a slight, real or fancied, and his capacity for writing innumerable statements of his claims was well known.

Lord Curzon gave him an interview at which he told him that "the Government knows well the good work you have done for the Empire." He said further, that during the siege of Kut or directly afterwards, some members of the Government had suggested that he should be promoted Lieut.-General, but that Lord Kitchener had said promotion should be deferred till afterwards. Here was light.

On January 7th, 1919, in reply to a request that he might be given some employment, Townshend received another blow full in the face! The War Office wrote officially, through the Military Secretary, that at present there was no employment for which he could be selected, and that he was placed on half pay as from January 9th!

The next blow for Townshend was a formal letter from the War Office saying that his qualifications for promotion to Lieutenant-General had been fully considered, and although the good services he had rendered had been fully appreciated, it was regretted that his request for promotion could not be approved.

He did not sit down quietly under this. For he now thought that he suspected the reasons which induced the War Office to refuse to grant him the promotion which he considered his right. He then attacked the War Office in the following letter:—

. . . I have been privately informed that a letter which I wrote to an Austrian friend of mine (who was the Military Attaché in Paris when I was British Military Attaché in 1905) on learning of the assassination at Serajevo of the

Austrian Archduke and Archduchess, written before war was even contemplated with Germany and Austria, came into the hands of the War Office, and is in existence there. I personally will not believe that such a private letter, which I had every right to write, could be used privately against me. It was a private letter written to a friend, in which I remember I expressed horror and detestation of the assassination, and which was written by me with no knowledge whatever that war would break out between my country and his. Moreover, if it was considered wrong of me to write this letter, why have I never been reprimanded or my reasons asked for writing it, and why was I selected to command a force on the Tigris, and left in ignorance of having committed a fault, if such can ever be called a fault?

He wound up by asking again for an interview with the Secretary of State for War. It is now necessary to say how Townshend had got wind of this letter, which had so mysteriously come into the hands of the War Office. It is rather a curious story. Was there, then, censorship of private letters in June, 1914—though war was not declared till August 4th, or was Townshend's correspondence surreptitiously intercepted?

Mr. H. A. Gwynne, editor of the *Morning Post*, an old friend of Townshend, and a comrade of his in Egyptian campaigns, informed him one evening at dinner that Colonel Fitzgerald\* the military secretary of Lord Kitchener, had told him at the beginning of the war (but asking him to keep it secret!), that Lord Kitchener had come into pos-

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\*Drowned, with Kitchener, when the *Hampshire* was mined.

session of a letter written by Townshend in which he had offered his services to Austria! Gwynne said he had known Townshend for years, and knew he was not the sort of man to do such a thing, and then asked Fitzgerald if *he* had seen the letter. Oh no, Fitzgerald had *not* seen the letter, but knew "it was all right." He finished by saying Townshend was perfectly welcome to repeat what he had told him.

Of course the whole story as told by Fitzgerald was ridiculous on the face of it. How could a General in the British Service at any time offer his services to another country?

But there was more to come. Gwynne also said that one day, during the time Townshend was advancing in Mesopotamia, he was lunching with Mrs. Townshend (a very old friend of his) at the Ritz, and a member of the Army Council connected with the organization of supply, with a party of ladies, was lunching at a table close by. After lunch and when all the ladies had gone, this officer came up to him and said: "Well, you were lunching in dangerous company!" He replied that he had known both Townshend and his wife for many years. Then the other, first enjoining secrecy, told him practically the same yarn that Fitzgerald had repeated before.

It seems somewhat strange that this General chose a newspaper editor, and a prominent one at that, to whom to make this confidence, and that in both cases secrecy was first enjoined. But he had got hold of the wrong man in this particular chief-tain of the Press. Mr. Gwynne said he owned no secrecy to anyone! There is yet another curious point which will be noticed by the mere "Man in the Street." Supposing, for the sake of argument, that this letter had reached the hands of the Secretary of State for War (Lord Kitchener) in the

ordinary course of the censorship and had rightly been passed on to his successors, Lord Derby, Lord Milner, and Mr. Churchill respectively, as a secret document of the Department, how was it that it came into the hands of this officer in particular, and no other official of the Army Council? It seems not a little singular that this officer, who was certainly not a friend of Townshend, should have been one of the inner circle chosen to see the "secret" document, and that it should have been he, and he alone, who gave it to the world by revealing it to the editor of one of the most important London dailies! It was a question of personal revenge.

On March 21st, Townshend got his interview with Mr. Churchill at last. Townshend at once told him all that he suspected, and was certainly astonished to hear that *the Selection Board for regulation of promotions had not even seen the letter at all*: that no one had seen it since the death of Lord Kitchener and Colonel Fitzgerald, but himself and Lord Milner, his predecessor. Mr. Churchill told Townshend he thought the letter was indiscreet, but *there was nothing in it in any way to prevent his promotion*: it had been written before the question of war between Austria and ourselves had come on the tapis, and he (Churchill) would unhesitatingly sign Townshend's promotion to Lieut.-General if it had been put before him; but the Selection Board had been unanimous in not promoting him. The only reason the Board put for not promoting him (for Churchill had specifically asked the question why) was that he had not been recommended for promotion by either Sir John Nixon or Sir Percy Lake.

Townshend had in truth quite forgotten all he had said, and was not a little astonished to find he had said so much! Besides his expression of detestation at the murders, he had bewailed his own lot to

his friend and spoke of the bad Government of England, mentioning Mr. Lloyd George by name, which he certainly ought not to have done. He did indeed say in this letter that he wished he could get a transfer into the Austrian Service, so as to get to the front, where he might be less unjustly treated. This was very different to *applying for a commission in the Austrian army*, as he has been widely accused of doing, and thus showing himself a traitor to his country! Churchill said that any clear-headed man reading that letter could see Townshend was not a traitor, even if his whole career had not proved his loyalty, down to the time when he had refused to join the agitation against Ulster with the remark that he could not go "against his salt."

Townshend asked if he was to consider his career ruined. Churchill's reply was: "Why ruined? I am looking for a command for you now!"

In April there is an entry in the diary showing what misery of mind he was going through at the neglect of the authorities:

. . . I made up my mind last night that I will not worry any more. I am so miserable that I shall be ill if I continue. The War Office have made me envy my former life as a prisoner, and I am determined to go to Russia and fight for loyal Russians against Bolshevism, and not bother my head any more about the famous "Cour de Miracles"—the Army Council!

The Press was practically unanimous as regards the treatment meted out to Townshend. In an article on March 2nd, the *Sunday Times* summed up the harsh treatment of returned prisoners of war by Government Departments, with special reference to Townshend's case. In this it was pointed out:—

(1) That three months had elapsed since his



release by the Turks and his arrival in England, and that no notice had been taken of him or re-employment offered him.

(2) That his recommendations of honours and promotion for officers under his command had been completely ignored.

(3) That his own promotion had been stopped while at least half a dozen major-generals had been promoted over his head.

On October 23rd, 1919, nearly three years and a half after the surrender of Kut, the Honours Gazette was published for services in connection with the gallant defence of that place. One would expect that the name of Major-General Townshend would head the list, seeing that it was entirely due to him the garrison held out so long and so gallantly. His name does not occur. That is the bald fact of a situation which so astonished the public.

But he was not without some consolations. In May, 1919, at the anniversary banquet of the Royal Society of St. George of England, Lord Birkenhead, then Lord Chancellor, was in the chair, and Townshend was one of the speakers. The Chairman in his speech referred to Townshend as a General who, by his heroism in a secondary theatre of the war, had written his name in history. He said his want of success was due to the inadequate means given him for the work, and spoke of the way the troops had cheered him when he was being taken away into captivity, showing what confidence they had in him.

Townshend received a tremendous ovation after his speech, and had to return thanks, and the Lord Chancellor when saying good-night told him he had spoken thus on purpose, knowing all that he had gone through, and that he had not received too much justice.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### IN PARLIAMENT

THE Member for the Parliamentary Division of the Wrekin, a Mr. Charles Palmer, had just died. He had been intimately associated with Mr. Horatio Bottomley in the conduct of *John Bull*. And Mr. Bottomley thought it would be an excellent idea if he could induce the hero of Kut to stand for the vacant seat under his personal auspices. The Wrekin Division was his own, so to speak. He ran it. Palmer had been his own candidate and had stood as an Independent. He had the brilliant idea of getting the General to take his place.

The offer was made. It was pointed out that success was almost a foregone conclusion. After a little weighing of pros. and cons., Townshend accepted, and placed himself under the ægis of the editor of *John Bull*. Many of his friends thought it a mistake, for he had certainly the personality, outside his military reputation, to win a seat in Parliament without the aid of a newspaper. On the other, hand, victory at the Wrekin was looked upon as a certainty which might not possibly be the case in other constituencies. He accepted, and the canvassing began almost at once.

With the man in the street it was popular enough. Though he might know little about politics, and care less, yet he knew all about Townshend of Kut! Here is a typical letter from an ex-service man:

No. 7 Ward, Cambridge Hospital,  
Aldershot.

I am one of the few left of the Kut garrison, one of General Townshend's gunners, and I am leav-

ing the Army unfit for further service after sixteen and a half years, having been very badly treated by the Turks during captivity. I am just recovering from an operation before entering civil life.

I am pleased to hear that "Our Charlie" is to represent the Wrekin Division. Well, take my tip, and give him a record majority. You'll never regret it. He has never been known to break his word—a thorough gentleman and one of the finest generals our Army has ever had. I had the honour of serving under him in the 2nd Rawal Pindi Division in India—the best division in the world. He made it so, and when he went to Mesopotamia they all wanted to go with him. I and a few gunners followed him, and we shall always feel proud of having fought under him. We absolutely worshipped him; we called him "Our Charlie." Let him be yours. He will make England fit for heroes; he is one himself. The one. Cheerio, the best of luck."

He made no secret as to what his principal attitude would be. He wished to be regarded as the chief advocate in Parliament of the interests of the ex-service men. As he said, since a career as soldier was denied him, he would serve his country by representing the ex-soldiers. Day after day, when addressing voters prior to the election, he repeated his views:—

I am intensely interested in the hardships of unemployed service men, and if I succeed I shall take up their cause. I am standing as an Independent. I think that is my rôle. I have always been independent more or less. I should be ashamed to inflict any grievances of my own on any constituency of my countrymen. Certainly I have had a little quarrel with the War Office, but am

I the only one? I wish, however, it to be stated clearly that I am not up against the Government. I was not content with my prospects in the Army, though I have devoted thirty-seven years of my life to it, have always loved my troops, and they have always given me their confidence.

There did not seem to be much doubt about his success at the polls. One hundred and ten nomination papers were handed in for him, representing a total of over 12,000 voters in the constituency. Four papers were sent in from each polling district, two signed by men and two by women. In the midst of all, he was again tempted in the matter of soldiering in Russia in an anti-Bolshevik campaign, for he received a telegram from General Wrangel worded as follows:—

Can you come over immediately to take command of an army in the Crimea to fight Bolshevism? Wrangel.

In his heart he wanted to go. But his wife naturally did not favour the idea, and he was dissuaded by his friends. He said to them: "I cannot remain idle. If the Wrekin electors do not want me, then I shall go and fight the Bolsheviks. My kit is already packed and if I lose this fight, I shall be off to Wrangel two days afterwards."

At that time, Wrangel's position was indeed desperate. The Bolsheviks had broken through his defences in the Crimea: refugees were already beginning to embark in large numbers: there had been desperate fighting, and Wrangel had fallen back. The fate of his whole army was in the balance, for all the Caucasus was under the influence of the Russian and Turkish adherents of Bolshevism.

The poll at the Wrekin was on November 20th,

and Townshend was returned by a substantial majority.

He made a creditable début and the Prime Minister (Mr. Lloyd George) who had always been thought to dislike him, followed the recognised custom in the case of a maiden speech, and made a courteous reference to him and his work in Mesopotamia:

I have great sympathy with what was said by my hon. and gallant friend below the gangway, whom we welcome to the House and who rendered such very conspicuous service at a critical moment with very inadequate resources. The defence he put up against overwhelming forces is one of the glories of the Army of which he is a member. . . .

The occasion was the debate on Mesopotamia on December 15th, 1920, and just before he spoke Townshend had heard that the Government had *reduced* the forces in Mesopotamia to 70,000 men. He could not refrain from pointing out that if he himself had had that number of men instead of the paltry 13,000 with which he was expected to take Baghdad, nothing but the Black Sea could have stopped his advance. He was all for leaving Mesopotamia to manage its own affairs, occupying at the most the province of Basra. He was persistent in pointing out that the Arabs were not a race for hard work. If Mesopotamia was to be run at a profit, it would have to be with the help of a large number of coolies from India, who must be protected by British bayonets, lest their throats be cut by the Arabs.

After that debate Townshend intervened but seldom, and only on those subjects on which he had the strongest opinions. These included everything to do with India, Egypt and other countries in

which he had served, the British alliance with France, the Irish question (for his blood boiled at the idea of loyal Englishmen, and women too, being shot down in cold blood), but above all the condition of the ex-soldier. In April, 1921, he strongly opposed the reduction of the cavalry, suggesting that in the hunt for something to cut down it would have been better to reduce some of the Departmental expenses, and keep the cavalry cadres intact.

In the following month, on the debate on the new policy adopted by the Government with regard to Mesopotamia (now known as Irak), in contradistinction to the policy of waste pursued by the Middle Eastern Committee of the Cabinet, when it was dealt with by the Foreign Office, Townshend supported the Government, for he looked on the plan proposed as practically an "evacuation," and thought it had a good chance of success.

In May of the same year, there cropped up a more personal question for Townshend in the refusal of the Government (*i.e.*, the Foreign Office) to grant him a passport for the purpose of visiting Turkey, as a private individual.

What was actually at the back of this refusal is not quite clear. The true explanation is probably to be found in the fact of the Prime Minister's strong leaning towards the side of the Greeks, and it was well known that Townshend admired the Turks.

With his usual obstinate persistency, Townshend had written time after time to various members of the Government, asking to be employed officially as an intermediary with Turkey in the interests of peace, and time after time his offer had been politely but firmly refused. He now tried to travel as a private individual, perhaps hoping that once at Angora and closeted with Mustapha Kemal, the British Government would take notice of him.

The question was as to the refusal of a personal passport in Townshend's own name. He asked why he could not have the same privilege as were extended to other members of the House, and to other subjects of His Majesty generally.

Mr. Chamberlain (then Lord Privy Seal), in his reply, pointed out that Townshend had, within the last three years, repeatedly proffered his assistance to the Foreign Office to conduct negotiations either in a private capacity or on behalf of the Government both at Constantinople and Angora. He said that the Government did not feel that Townshend's presence would conduce to the end they had in view, and told him so. Nevertheless he had continued to press for passport facilities although he must have known that his intervention was not desired by the Government. Mr. Chamberlain concluded by saying:—

In these circumstances, the Secretary of State had no alternative but to inform him, as he did on March 27th, that such a journey taken by him at the present time would be the reverse of opportune, as it could not fail to be misunderstood both by our Allies and by Turkey.

There was much talk of civil war coming in Ireland. Townshend believed it would, and he scented a possibility of getting military employment there somehow! Where there was any fighting to be done he must have his share.

His sympathies were all with the Government in the Irish question. By the light of later events it is hard to realise how great was the indignation of the country at large over the treatment of loyal subjects by rebels. But a strong point in an Englishman's character is the duty of obedience to the law, and once a matter is settled *legally* he will accept it

loyally however unjust it may once have appeared to him.

So Townshend resolved to break away from the Independent group of M.P.'s and accept the Unionist whip. Other considerations no doubt helped him to this decision. He had never felt quite comfortable *dans cette galère*.

He quietly freed himself from connection with it and accepted the whips of the Unionists.

In January, 1922, he had occasion to visit the district of the Wrekin for a talk with his election agent at Wellington. He did not then intend to seek re-election when Parliament was dissolved, but would not announce the fact until the date of the General Election was known.

There was no doubt of his personal popularity in the constituency and he received an excellent reception at the Farmers' Dinner at Newcastle-under-Lyme. Here he also endeavoured to convey the impression that certain recent regrettable incidents in the Law Courts had been a most unpleasant business with him.

We know that one of the ruling passions of his life had been to restore the ancient prestige of the Townshend family to something of the lustre it had enjoyed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The unhappy events of 1904, leading to the sale of the Townshend portraits and heirlooms, had been a most distressing blow to his pride. He had dreamed of putting them back in their own proper places at the Hall, had he come into the title. This was now an impossibility, and the grand old Hall would remain a stripped mansion. But he still thought that he had done enough for the country in his career to warrant a more substantial reward than a knighthood and a D.S.O. There were two peerages in the family in abeyance, and he set on foot proceedings to get one of these revised in



his favour, or alternatively that he should be created Baron Townshend of Kut. His fortune was large enough to keep up the status of a peer, and he could take his proper place in the country where a Townshend had always held one of the most foremost positions. It may be stated at once that nothing came of it.

He was gratified by being asked to serve on the Unionist Reconstruction Committee, and took an eager part in the proceedings which were to have such decisive results.

The reassembling of Parliament was fixed for February 7th, and in the interim he paid a short visit to France. He gives an amusing account of the way the French shops and restaurants were out to "fleece" the English.

Eight of us met and went to dine at a little café in Montmartre where our host, Monsieur de Forges, a Spaniard, said we should get an excellently cooked dinner and cheap. The bill was 1,100 francs! Our host was very annoyed and said he would never go there again, and put it down to the fact that we were talking English! It appears if you speak English in Paris you are mercilessly fleeced everywhere. At the proper rate of exchange the bill would have been £44: at the current rate it was £23 and only six bottles of champagne. . . . At night, a taxi will often decline to start without a preliminary payment of 20 francs. The French are certainly on the make—and they call us a "nation of shopkeepers!"

But he was always devoted to France and the French and the award of the "Croix de Guerre" pleased him immensely, though he could not help wondering why the notice of it from the British War Office *via* the *Gazette* reached him only in February, 1922, though the award had been actually

made and the medal sent to him in July, 1921. More inscrutable War Office ways!

In the same month, the Near East Peace Conference was in full swing in Paris. Townshend wrote very strongly on the subject to Mr. Chamberlain:

My dear Mr. Chamberlain,

May I write you a few words on the Paris Conference, as I wrote to you about it the other day? I read in the Press that Lord Curzon is trying to put Harrington and other British officers from Constantinople to supervise Greek evacuation and Turkish administration in the province of Smyrna. Well, if this is the case, all I can say is that the Turks will refuse to have anything to do with them. The Turks, both at Angora and Constantinople are incensed at the British administration at Constantinople during the occupation, and speak openly and loudly about it. I dined with Yusuf Kemal on Saturday night, when he was in London. He said that they would welcome me as Governor of Smyrna: and both sides would, for the Turks would know they had a friend in me, and the Christians would know that no one would be harmed under my régime. I accordingly offered my services for this appointment before Lord Curzon left for Paris. I should be glad if you would place the matter before the Prime Minister. If I could bring about peace where the Turks would not listen to anyone else, then why not use my services? Izzet Pasha told me the other day that was the reason they wanted me as Ambassador to Turkey. I do not think Lord Curzon would favour that for a moment: he had Foreign Office men to consider, but I want the Prime Minister to know that I could bring about peace, and that if our officials are sent to Smyrna there will be war. . . . I have made up my mind

to go to Turkey directly the peace is signed. Kemel has invited me to Angora and says they will give me a reception never equalled to any Englishman before. I am crossing to Paris tomorrow. . . .

In reply, Chamberlain promised to give the Prime Minister the letter. The whole question of Townshend's journey to the East became now a crucial one, and led up to a refusal of a passport even as a private individual, and to the question in the House as related earlier in the chapter.

## CHAPTER XXV

### VISITS TO ANGORA

THE situation between the Turks and the Greeks became more acute when the former discovered that the English Government was favouring all the claims of Greece, and had awarded to them as spoils a large part of Thrace (including the sacred city of Adrianople) in addition to the important port of Smyrna and a considerable hinterland. The Turks themselves had had Mesopotamia, Palestine, Syria and many of the islands taken from their Empire. The question became a serious one as to which of the two nations, the Turkish or the Greek, should be the predominant power in the Near East. But while the Powers were quarrelling at Lausanne, and discussing what was to be done, the Turk, a man of action, took the initiative, routed the Greeks on the Sakhara River in Asia Minor and eventually turned them out of Smyrna. In fact, roughly, this was the position in March, 1922, when Townshend's application for a passport to Angora was denied to him, as it was said, "until a more suitable moment." He persisted in his application, writing personally to Lord Curzon, and received the following reply:—

Dear Townshend,

I seem quite unable to convince you that, while not in the least questioning your sincere and patriotic intentions, we do not wish to send anyone to Angora at the present stage at all—in fact it would be directly contrary to my pledges both to the French and the Italians. I may further add that the opinions you express on certain

aspects of the proposed settlement are so sharply in contrast with the views entertained by His Majesty's Government and by the Allies, now acting, I am happy to say, in complete unison, that the last thing we would desire is to authorise the despatch of a delegate, unofficial or otherwise, who does not agree with us. I must therefore adhere to the terms of the reply sent to you from the Foreign Office on March 27th.

Townshend then applied for a passport to visit France and certain other specified countries, and was informed by the Chief Passport Officer that it could only be granted on his furnishing a signed undertaking that he would in no circumstances attempt to enter Turkey. He was furious, considering the tone of the letter offensive to himself. It was probably as a result of this letter that he decided to go to Turkey on his own, and not to wait for an official passport. He made a final effort in the matter by writing to Lord Derby, who, however, declined to see him, and told him frankly he entirely agreed with Lord Curzon that no passport should be issued.

His next move was to Paris where he saw Ferid Bey, the Angora representative there, who agreed to send a message to Kemal to the effect that Townshend was shortly coming to see him at Angora, and, moreover, intended to offer his services and his sword to the Turks.

Over to Paris for the Whitsuntide recess, and back to London for the reassembling of Parliament: ever restless, ever discussing the Turkish question with all and sundry, including his father-in-law, Count Cahen D'Anvers, and Samuel, the head of the Shell group, whose interests in oil made him keenly alive to everything connected with Asia Minor or Persia. He attacked the Eastern policy of the Government in a vigorous speech on June 15th, but his words

would have had more effect if people had not thought he was becoming a fanatic on the side of the Turks. Any mention of the Greeks was to him like a red rag to a bull.

Meanwhile a direct invitation to visit Angora from Kemal Pasha himself reached him through Ferid Bey. Kemal said he would welcome him as his special guest during his stay, that he could then judge for himself as to the actual situation in Turkey, and the condition of the army. He said the Turks would feel honoured by his visit. There could, however, be no question of a command for him in the Turkish forces, for it had been decreed that no foreigner could henceforth hold any command over the Turks. This was of course the natural reaction after the disastrous German military rule.

Townshend was no doubt much flattered by the terms of this invitation, and he made up his mind to accept it.

*June 19.* Dined with Miss Elise Maxwell at Berkeley Hotel, about twenty of us, including Lady Millicent Howes and her husband and Mrs. William Randolph Hearst, wife of Hearst the millionaire of the yellow press. She has got all Paris after her and is at the "Crillon" where she has taken the whole of the first floor. . . .

*June 21.* Lunched with Count Sala at the Cercle Union (to which I also belong) to meet Mrs. William Randolph Hearst again. She seems very charming. After dinner, went to some theatricals at the house of M. Meunier, the chocolate king, and there was a dance after. A very mixed crowd and I bored myself intensely.

*June 26.* Alice and I lunched with Mrs. William Randolph Hearst at the Crillon. About 30 people to lunch. I took in Princess Christopher of Greece—an enemy! As everyone knows I am upholding

the cause of the Turks! She was Mrs. Leeds, the rich American widow. She talked very charmingly, saying I ought to see the King of Greece and hear the Greek side of the question. I am inclined to think this was a trick arranged by Mrs. Hearst. Naturally, I did not tell the Princess that I was going to see Kemal. She asked me to go to tea and talk with some Greeks, people who would put the Greek point of view before me, but I gave that party a miss!

The next day he left Paris for Marseilles, taking the precaution to send a letter to his secretary, Miss Byrne, to be delivered personally to Captain Gee, V.C., M.P., who had undertaken to defend him if attacked in the House for going to Turkey in Asia.

. . . In that letter I explained the whole case, and my treatment by the Government after the War being part of the treatment to-day. Valetta Byrne was to take a copy and give the original to Captain Gee.

At Marseilles Townshend dined with Marshal Lyautey, who had been so successful in the administration of French interests in Morocco. He was charming to him, and gave him an introduction to General Gouraud, then in command in Syria.

*July 2.* Dined at the Colonial Exhibition where after dinner a young Spanish lady named Antonia came and talked with us and made herself very pleasant. She hailed from Majorca. She offered me *Scottish Hospitality* whenever I passed through Marseilles!!!

*July 8.* We moored alongside the quay at Alexandria. British officials examined all passports and visa'd them. They must have seen that mine had a French diplomatic passport to Syria, but no

remark was made. I went into the town to buy a new pair of braces and saw the old Palais Centrale, with the Bourse where I used to go on main guard in 1885, my last visit to Alexandria. The town I find much improved in this quarter, with fine houses, good shops and new hotels. Nothing changed however in the old town—the same narrow, evil-looking Rue des Sœurs. . . . In the harbour I noticed the King's yacht, of some 6,000 tons, always moored off the Ras El Tin palace, where the King and all his harem live, and always with steam up! . . .

*July 9.* I see in the papers that General Townshend, the hero of Kut el Amara, has arrived in the *Lotus*, and also Admiral Grandclement, in command of the French squadron in Syria, and that both are going to Beyrout. I decided not to go on shore to-day. . . .

*July 10.* Mr. Stanley Baker of the *Egyptian Gazette* came to see me this morning on board. I told him I was only on a holiday and wished to see Syria. He asked my views on the Turco-Greek conflict, and I gave him a copy of Hansard with my last speech on that subject in the House of Commons. . . . When he left the ship, I repeated to him that I was not on any official work and asked him to let no mistake be made about it.

At the little port of Haifa at the foot of Mount Carmel, Townshend sent a wireless to General Gouraud, to say he had letters of introduction and was very desirous of talking with him. He intended to push on to Kemal without more delay after seeing Gouraud.

At Beyrout Gouraud sent a staff officer, Captain de Miribel, to meet Townshend: he was accom-



panied by a major of the British army attached as liaison officer to Gouraud's staff.

I went to the Hotel D'Orient for the night, said by Cook to be the best. There is only one bathroom in the whole hotel, so I need not say what kind of a place it is. The dinner I could not eat and I was very much annoyed at the loss of my suit case, containing all my shirts, vests, collars, etc., and all my "lingerie"—and silk lingerie at that! However, Cook's man was so frightened at my filthy language that he remained up till 2 a.m. looking for it, and eventually found it in the Custom House. . . . The business of getting ashore and the arrangements at the Custom House are the record as well as the limit. People in crowds fought to get into the dirty old place: monkeys of Syrians minutely inspected all luggage: three times we had to show passports before we even got into the place, and though, as a guest of General Gouraud my baggage was not opened, I did not get to the hotel till 9 p.m.

Townshend ascertained that a boat would leave Beyrout for Mersina, the Turkish port in the Gulf of Alexandretta, on July 15th, and not another one before the 26th, so he decided on the earlier date. General Gouraud welcomed him at his hill cottage at Aliyeh, 2,400 feet above the sea, but could not or would not talk official business with him. It was arranged however that he should dine that night with M. Caix, the French High Commissioner for Syria, who conducted all political business in the province.

. . . I enjoyed my dinner with M. Caix: his wife is charming and so is the pretty wife of Captain de Miribel, who drove me there. . . . I talked with Caix and told him clearly that I was

invited by Kemal as his guest to discuss the situation. I told him also of a talk I had had with M. Poincaré. We got on very well. I told him that if I could make Kemal moderate his demands I would let him know at once, and he could acquaint the French and English Governments directly. I do not wish to do anything through Constantinople.

*July 14.* Lunched with General Gouraud in Beyrout. French National Fête day. Madame de Miribel drove me to the Restaurant de France by the sea. . . . Had a long talk with General Gouraud.

*July 15.* Saw Cook & Son, who told me that there would be no Italian boat to Mersina on account of plague at Jaffa and Haifa—but there *might* be a boat next week! This is most annoying. I shall have to take the train to Aleppo and so on to Adana.

In his conversation with Gouraud, Townshend found that their views were almost identical. The General could not comprehend the attitude of the British Foreign Office. He said there were only two alternatives. (1) To *compel* the Turks to agree to the British terms as formulated at Paris, or (2) to *compel* the Greeks to leave Asia Minor. As to the first, he asked if Parliament was to be asked for 50,000 men to aid the Greeks at Smyrna. As to the second alternative, Townshend notes that he said:

You invited the Greeks to invade Turkish territory in Asia Minor and they marched on Angora. That was invasion, and meant that Greece must occupy the country they had taken. Well, they failed, and are now on the defensive. We must have peace, and so we must seek it in every way, since you cannot compel the Turks to put up with

your terms you insist on. The Turks have been ten years at war and you still harass and bully them.

These were exactly Townshend's own views. Of course he was delighted, more especially when he discovered that they were also the views of M. Caix, the French High Commissioner. It was arranged that on his return from seeing Kemal, Townshend should stop at Beyrout and see both Gouraud and Caix. Moreover, he was to have an introduction to a French officer from Gouraud's command who was acting as *Officier de Liaison* with Kemal Pasha.

Dinners and dances filled up the time till Townshend's departure which, after all had to be *via* the long and tedious railway journey to Aleppo. Before however, he could leave Beyrout, he had to go through an interview with Mr. Satow, the British Consul-General, who had evidently been in communication with the Foreign Office in London with regard to Townshend's presence in Asia Minor.

*July 17.* About 6.30 p.m., Mr. Satow, the British Consul-General was announced in the hotel, and I told them to send him up. He said he had a message from the Foreign Office for me. This was to the effect that he was to remind me of my agreement not to enter Turkish territory whilst peace negotiations were going on. He (Mr. Satow) hoped I was not going to Turkey as all Beyrout seemed to think. All the place, he said, was talking of my visit, and all said I was going to Turkey, and they all knew of the row in Parliament over my passport. He said he hoped I would not mind his speaking frankly and advising me not to go. I said, "Oh, no, I do not mind: I shall speak frankly myself." I would not say I would not go to Turkey, as I intended to go. In the statement to which the Foreign Office referred, I had clearly

stated that it was not *at present* my intention to enter Turkey whilst the peace negotiations were in progress. That was back in April or March. Since then, on May 30th, I had made a speech in the House, attacking the policy of the Government on the Near East question, and said they had broken off negotiations with Kemal by refusing to parley with him at Ismid, and that I desired to go, as I had arranged before, to see Kemal and get him to moderate his demands. I said I could not go on waiting forever. . . .

What Townshend undoubtedly meant, *and herein lies his justification*, was that his agreement early in the year had been a provisional one only, and with that idea he had expressly used the words "at present." After his speech on May 30th, he looked upon that agreement as cancelled and himself as free to go to Turkey, with a passport if they would give him one as they did to Tom, Dick and Harry, or without one if they persistently refused.

Mr. Satow told him that he had only done his bare duty in delivering the message from the Foreign Office, and that if he went to Turkey nothing would make the Turks believe that he was not on an official mission.

I said I did not agree with him. Kemal, who had invited me, knew that I was against the Government in this matter, and he also knew that I represented a strong party in England who were now for the Turks. I had never lost an opportunity, when asked, of saying I was not on an official mission. Mr. Satow told me the Turks were treating our merchant people very badly at Mersina. They were continually harassed and not allowed out at night from their houses; and in some cases, goods had been confiscated. I said: "I will put that right in five minutes." He said:

"I hope you will." "You will see," I said. (This will give me a good opportunity of showing I can do what the F.O. cannot do!)

Townshend ended the interview by repeating that he intended to go into Turkey *via* Aleppo and Alexandretta, and should be back probably in about three weeks. He adds:

But I determined not to go by boat from Alexandretta, as the Greek warships might, for some inexplicable reason, search my ship, take me off and deliver me to an English war vessel! Why not? seeing who was the intimate friend of the said Greeks! . . .

General Gouraud had sent a French officer, one Captain Robin of the Air Force, to act as a sort of A.D.C. to Townshend on the journey.

The French authorities everywhere were most civil. At Aleppo he saw General de La Motte, the Governor, to whom he had brought a letter from General Gouraud, in which it was said that the Commander of that glorious defence of Kut had no need of introduction, and that he was also one of the most formidable partisans of the Anglo-French Alliance. General de La Motte was asked to facilitate as much as possible the journey and objects of a distinguished soldier.

Like Gouraud, de La Motte was entirely for the Turks and against the Greeks. He was also imbued with the belief that there was a great movement among the Turks and other Mohammedan peoples against the European Powers, which, if peace were not soon established, might easily lead to a Jihad or Holy War. This was yet another inducement for Townshend to press forward to his interview with Kemal. Rightly or wrongly, he firmly believed he

had it in his power to promote an early peace, for the Turks were everywhere most friendly.

Before his departure from Aleppo, General de La Motte strongly advised Townshend not to attempt to pass the col in the mountains in the dark. He warned him against the bad road, but still more on account of the bands of brigands which infested the highways, frequently stopping and robbing the country carts, and all sorts of wayfarers. These brigands were not Turks, but Armenians, refugees from Cilicia, and two policemen were ordered to accompany Townshend and Robin over the mountains. As they pursued their journey evidences were plain that the police and cavalry were under orders to *circular sur les routes*. He says that the two cars (a French one for himself and Robin, and a Ford for the baggage and servants) were "rotten little affairs, wretched and dirty to look at," but there was no breakdown at all, and the whole way was negotiated at top speed.

At Alexandretta he was warmly received by M. de Cayla, the French Colonial Political Officer ("A nice fellow about 35, with a very pretty and young wife") who passed him on to Mr. Catoni, the son of the British Consul, then absent. Young Catoni housed the party most comfortably. Townshend spoke to him most frankly as to his intentions, and gave him a copy of his famous speech of May 30th.

Townshend left for Adana by rail. Everywhere he was seemingly expected—saluted and salaamed to, all along the line. Traces of the German occupation were everywhere. German engines and rolling stock and most solidly built stations, a clear proof that the Germans had meant to stay!

At one of the larger towns, he was met by the Mudir, who told him that all prayed for peace, and thanked him in the name of the Turkish nation for what he was doing to bring it about. At Adana

(where he had stopped on his way from Baghdad to Constantinople, a prisoner, with Morland and Parr) he found another great and ceremonial welcome. Here he sent a telegram to Kemal asking if an engine and carriage might be sent specially to take him on to Konia instead of waiting for the ordinary train. The response was immediate. Kemal wired he would send the engine and carriage and would meet him at Konia, whither he was coming from Angora.

All this time his movements were being watched at home. It had been stated officially by the Government that he had broken a written pledge by visiting Turkey. This was wired out to him by *The Evening News*, the telegram addressed to care of Mustapha Kemal Pasha at Angora. Ever on the look-out for news, the paper asked for Townshend's reply.

On reaching Konia, where he was again received with great ceremony, the first thing he asked Kemal to do was to send off a reply to *The Evening News*, which, roughly condensed, was as follows: "Refer Captain Gee, M.P., who knows facts."

Kemal and Townshend had a long talk that evening, sitting up to past two in the morning, with a Turkish naval officer to interpret, though occasionally speaking together in French. The diary gives some particulars of the conversation:

. . . I led off *re* guarantees for the Dardanelles. As regards the evacuation of Turkish territory in Asia Minor by the Greek troops, Kemal said I wanted him to shut his eyes to the question of Adrianople, and I said yes, in the cause and advantage of peace, Adrianople might be left in the background for a time. I hoped he would understand my demands and the necessity for climbing down a little. Coming to the point after much talk, he said he thought the principal objec-

tive of my visit was peace. Well then, he said, let us put aside all details, and, "I tell you that Turkey as a man asks nothing better than peace: we have always longed for it. If the British Government seriously desires peace there is no difficulty we cannot smooth over. . . .

When the meeting broke up in the early hours of the morning, Townshend may have felt justified in thinking that his journey would not be without good results, if only the British Prime Minister would consent to look upon the question with other eyes than purely Greek ones!

The next day he went to Angora by special invitation of Kemal, and was a guest of Rafaal Pasha, the Turkish General who defeated General Murray at Gaza. From there he sent a long telegram to Captain Gee, V.C., M.P., in which he repeated that immediate peace with Turkey was possible on evacuation of Smyrna and Turkish territory in Asia Minor by the Greeks. He said his views were shared by the French liaison officer at Angora. If the peace effort failed, serious Mohammedan questions would arise. He requested Gee to show copies of his telegram to the Prime Minister, Chamberlain, Asquith and other important members, and send copies to the papers. He took the precaution of sending his cable in cipher.

Rafaal Pasha gave a big dinner in honour of Townshend at Angora. All the Ministers were there, and the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with his wife ("A charming Turkish lady!"). He took note also of one of the waiters, Halida Hanoun, in the army with the rank of Corporal, who had been under fire at the recent battle with the Greeks, spoke English and French perfectly, and was also a poet of some distinction!

The diary is full of detailed descriptions of the



places at which he stayed—Konia, Angora, Alexandretta, Beyrout, etc., and of the people he met. His old habit of jotting down every little detail clung to him still. He writes page upon page daily, and again one wonders how he could possibly find time to put it all down. It can only be supposed that his temperament was such that he could not be idle for a single moment, and even in the hottest and most trying weather and under trying circumstances must out with his pen and jot down everything!

Ten or a dozen pages of close writing are taken up with what he himself considered should be the conditions of peace. It is interesting to note that they differ very little from what was afterwards arranged, though eventually the Greeks got a good deal more than he would have given them. He adds his opinion that:

It does not seem to be understood what a deep suspicion of the British Government now remains imbedded in the minds of the Turks, for having permitted the Greeks to launch their offensive in the middle of the London Conference!—an act of absolute treachery. Who can persuade the Turks either that the Prime Minister did not know of the Greek preparations to do it, or that the British Government could not have stopped the offensive at once by raising a finger? This is repeated to me again and again, and when it is maintained that the Greeks will evacuate Asia Minor, they say: "Will they, unless we throw them out? Will England force them to go?" . . . The Russians are also mentioned. I do not think the Bolshevik doctrines will ever really gain ground in Turkey, but they say—If England drives us to the wall, we will call in the Russians also. . . .

Townshend, a good judge of such matters, was struck with the high state of efficiency of the

Turkish Army. He found the morale wonderful, the food and equipment good. They had still the artillery used in the war, for though they had been compelled to surrender all the breech-blocks of guns and rifles, he found that these had been replaced by some of their own making in the arsenal at Angora.

He found, in short, a new kind of Turk, with new aspirations and fresh energy—the old-fashioned type having almost disappeared. Officers of the high command appeared to be well instructed, while, after an experience of ten years' war, the Regimental officers were excellent. Stories of the Greek army disclosed a very different state of affairs.

It will be remembered that years before, in his outburst against the Turks, Gladstone had advocated turning them "bag and baggage" out of Europe. Townshend has some very sensible remarks on this idea which was apparently also the idea of the Coalition Cabinet. He says:

Turkey must not be pushed from Europe into Asia. It cannot be urged too strongly that she must be allowed to keep a foothold in Europe. If you push Turkey out of Europe into Asia Minor altogether, she will become an Asiatic power with dire consequences to us in India. It is in the vital interests of Great Britain that Turkey should retain her footing in Europe at Constantinople. Finally, it does not seem to be understood that this is an entirely new Turkey. All the young Turks say they are modern, cosmopolitan, and up-to-date, and desire to be recognised as a nation composed of both Mohammedans and Christians. The old Mussulman business is *vieux jeu*.

Townshend had a long talk with the French liaison officer, who showed him the telegram he had sent, giving Townshend's views to Monsieur Poincaré,

which the latter could take with him to London for any conference on Near East matters. The Prime Minister had a copy also from Townshend direct. The officer was starting for Paris almost immediately, and it was gratifying to Townshend to find that their views were absolutely in agreement on all essential points.

He left for Konia the next day by motor car. His journey was made as easy as possible. Kemal had instructed his Director-General of Railways to arrange a special train to Alexandretta, and anything else he might want.

*Aug. 1.* This time it was daylight going through the great pass in the Taurus Erégli to Bozanti, where I had passed in a motor car in 1915 on my way to Constantinople. The pass is beautiful and wild, till one descends the slopes of the Taurus, approaching Yenidje near Adana. It all reminds me of Kashmir, the same pines covering the sides of the mountains overhanging the pass. The army of Alexander the Great passed through this defile.

At Adana the troops crowding a train cheered him as he stood on the verandah of his carriage. The whole army appeared to know about his journey, and as he said—"cheered me like blazes and shouted *Inshallah!*"

Here he received a letter signed by all the Christians in the Adana province, to the effect that they were glad to be under Turkish rule, and that it was all lies to say they were badly treated, as was made out by the foreign propaganda in Europe.

Arrived back at Beyrout, he was once more received most hospitably by General Gouraud, and entertained by young Lyautey, the nephew of the Marshal, who was acting as political officer to Gouraud. Everyone wanted to make his short stay agreeable—including the ladies.

At the Casino Hotel for a dance, and met some very charming Syrian ladies who made my stay this time much more pleasant than the last. They treated me *en prince*, dinners and luncheons, etc., and before leaving I was entertained at a big dinner party by General Gouraud, at which full evening dress and decorations were worn.

He reached Paris early in August and London five days later, but passed on almost at once to Vere Lodge to see his daughter Audrey.

While in London he had seen one Member of Parliament who said he thought Lloyd George would now see him about the information he had brought from Angora. But the Prime Minister lay low! Townshend had arrived on August 22nd, and the M.P. referred to above had communicated with his secretary. Yet, after an interval of nine days there was no sign. On August 31st, Townshend sat down and wrote one of his long explanatory letters to Mr. Lloyd George, and six days afterwards a telephone message reached him as follows:—

Your letter was the first intimation received by me that you wished to see me. As you see, I am at present out of London, but I shall be very glad to consider any views and suggestions which you may wish to put before the Government, if you will kindly write them. I shall be meeting the Foreign Secretary to discuss the situation, very shortly.

Townshend wrote again, saying how surprised he was to hear that the Prime Minister had not heard till he had got his letter. He enclosed a copy of the full report on his visit to Angora, and took it himself to Downing Street.

This could not very well be overlooked. It was acknowledged by one of Mr. Lloyd George's secre-

taries, who told him that the Prime Minister "had not yet had time to consider it, but will do so in good time before the question of the peace settlement comes up again."

Being thus put off once more, Townshend returned to Paris and got into touch with Monsieur Poincairé, himself informing him of all that had passed between him and Lloyd George.

In his interview with Monsieur Poincairé, he was accompanied by Monsieur Franklin-Bouillon. Here he heard that the French Government were astounded, and also somewhat puzzled at the action of the British Government, and ordered the withdrawal of every French soldier on the Asiatic shore. He also heard a report that the British Cabinet had invited Serbia and Greece to send a division each to Constantinople, but it appeared that Serbia refused, being, like Italy, at one with France on all points.

Kemal, on his side, was acting cautiously and waiting for the British Cabinet to make its decision.

On September 20th, Townshend was informed that Mr. Worthington Evans, the Secretary of State for War, would like to see him, and he spent an hour at the War Office. They discussed the situation at Chanak, on the Asiatic shore of the Straits. The Minister said it was a serious one. At any moment a shot might be fired which would light up the whole of the East. He sneered at the French for, as he put it, "running away." But Townshend told him the French did not "run away," only they were not going to risk the loss of their Colonial Empire in a Holy War with Islam, even if we were foolish enough to do so.

Throughout the interview the Minister for War was most friendly to Townshend, and listened patiently to all he had to say, winding up by agreeing to speak to the Prime Minister that evening, and try to get him to send Townshend off to Kemal

to keep him quiet till a Conference could be arranged.

I asked: Is Kemal to look on while Lloyd George is reorganising the Greeks, and trying to get the Serbians and Rumanians to help him hold Constantinople? He agreed with every word, and said if he were Kemal, he would have done the same. So I got my point home in that direction! He could not believe that the French had withdrawn from Ismid and Scutari. I said they had, and that he would remember my conversation and find I was right. I said it was a certainty that the French would never help the British to go against the just rights of Turkey. I told him that Serbia and Rumania were sure to side with France and Italy against us. He said: "Not Rumania!" I replied: "Yes, Rumania would, because if she moved against the Turks, Russian armies would at once attack them, for the Russians were with the Turks." . . . On coming away he thanked me very much for my advice, promising to speak to Lloyd George about my going out to Kemal. But he said the difficulty lay with Lord Curzon. . . .

M. Franklin-Bouillon was then about to start for Angora to represent the French with Kemal, and Townshend tried very hard to get the Prime Minister to send him also. He wrote to him again, saying he would rather go to Kemal with a mandate than without one. It seems rather strange that he should have persevered, for he must have realised that Mr. Lloyd George's ideas were utterly opposed to his own, and to those of the French.

As a last chance, he paid a visit to Lord Long at his country place. Long was most sympathetic, and dictated a letter to Mr. Chamberlain, in which he said he hoped Townshend would be sent out to

Kemal to use a steady influence over him while affairs were being negotiated, instancing, moreover, the mission of Franklin-Bouillon as an additional reason. He pointed out that Townshend did not want publicity and that matters could be arranged quite quietly.

Lord Long said also that I was a *persona gratis-sima* with Kemal, and so could do good work in that way. He said also that the Prime Minister ought to see me, and he also said that if the public learned that every means had not been taken to preserve peace, there would be great indignation.

*Sept. 29.* I saw Mr. Chamberlain this morning at Downing Street, and I saw at once that he was against using my services with Kemal. For he said: "Kemal would think that the British Cabinet was climbing down"! Always this fear on the part of the excellent gentlemen forming the Cabinet of Mr. Lloyd George:—"Climbing Down"—a thing that they have practised assiduously for the last two years! I should have thought they had got used to it. He would not put any proposition before the Council to-day, and if they elected to use my services I should hear from the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. . . . Thus have I done my best to obtain peace. I am convinced that they will not use me and there is every prospect of war. . . .

When the British representatives at Lausanne had refused to allow the Turks to fortify Constantinople, Ismet Pasha candidly asked the advice of Townshend, who was on the spot most of the time.

His advice was that Ismet should, instead, ask for the individual and collective guarantee of England and France for the security of Constantinople.

This Lord Curzon also refused, but offered instead *the security of the League of Nations!* And perhaps, naturally, Ismet felt unable to place sufficient reliance in the power of the League to accept its mandate.

It can thus be justly claimed for Townshend that he did much towards settling the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne. His opinion was highly valued by all the Turks, and not least by Ismet Pasha, who represented them at Lausanne. Ismet knew that Townshend was really sincere in his friendship for Turkey. He listened to his advice—and, what is more, he took it. It was not till July, 1923, that the Treaty was finally signed on the shores of the Swiss lake.

The real settlement, however, was destined to be made in another way—the defeat at long last of the Coalition Government. On October 19th, 1922, there took place at the Carlton Club that historical meeting of Conservative Members, which ended in a resolution to go to the country as a purely Conservative Party, with a Conservative programme, and with a Conservative Prime Minister.

Political events moved with startling rapidity. Townshend thought he should again be in the House, and wrote to Sir George Younger as to the chances of finding him a constituency.

Various places were suggested—the Isle of Ely for one. But Townshend wrote that many Conservatives had promised to support the Liberal Coalition member, Mr. Coote, if he would undertake to support Bonar Law. Townshend was disappointed, but did not wish to risk a defeat. He was getting wiser. Eventually another candidate was adopted—one Captain Coats, as they did not want a Liberal member, if it could be avoided. It was a reverse for Townshend, and Sir George Younger was disappointed too, but explained that they did



not like to interfere with the plans of the local executive.

In November family matters occupied his attention. His dearly loved daughter and only child was married to Comte Baudoin de Borchgrave D'Altena. The ceremony took place at the residence of the Count Cahen D'Anvers in the Rue de Bassano, and the young girl must have looked lovely in a silver tissue gown cut on mediæval lines, with a cloth of silver train lined with velvet and ornamented with a girdle of pearls and diamonds, and pearl and diamond lilies in her hair. The eight grown-up bridesmaids were in blue velvet, with silver girdles and shoes, and carried pale pink carnations. The bride's train was carried by three little children in pink.

After this domestic excitement Townshend sat down to his correspondence again and wrote a long letter to Kemal. It was an appeal to his Turkish friend to make for peace even at the cost of a little self-sacrifice of his legitimate demands. Townshend pointed out that in the Mudania Conference Kemal had obtained practically the whole of his objective, and went on to say:

. . . I do beg of you to be content with that for the present, and strengthen Turkey by peace and commerce. Turkey wants money in order to put its railways and docks in proper order. If rumours get about that she is asking for too much, or the impossible, the public of foreign nations will get distrustful and frightened for their money, and you will not be able to borrow. Unfortunately for Turkey, she must be for some years still dependent on foreign loans. I would not presume to write to you like this did I not know that you are aware how I am devoted heart and soul to your cause, and that I am so proud of the affec-

tion of the Turks for me, and moreover I am so proud of our friendship, you and I.

He went on to point out that the new Government, with a good majority was likely to be far more friendly to Turkey than when Lloyd George had the control of affairs.

In December there was a wave of indignation in Athens over the execution of Gounaris, the late Prime Minister, and his colleagues. Much mud was thrown about, some of it at British Ministers. It was revealed that so long ago as February, 1922, Gounaris had informed the British Government by letter that the Greeks were in such a desperate situation in Asia Minor that they could not possibly hold out unless men, money and munitions were supplied. Lord Curzon encouraged him by the hope of a successful outcome of the Paris Conference, and they hung on till August, when Lloyd George made his startling pro-Greek speech in the House of Commons.

Such was the belief in immediate help from England, that this speech was actually issued to the Greek army as a special Order of the Day! Then the Turks attacked.

The sequel is known. Smyrna was set on fire, the Greeks ran for their lives. Revolution broke out; Constantine abdicated; Venizelos appeared once more on the scene; Gounaris and his Ministers were charged with treason and executed.

Posterity will decide what amount of responsibility should rest on the shoulders of Lloyd George for these disasters in the Hellenic world.

Townshend hoped against hope that he might be allowed to have some share in the settlement of Near Eastern affairs, and that the Government, being no longer under the domination of Lloyd George, would

see that there was something to be said also for the other side.

He divided his time between Norfolk, London and France, ever a very restless individual. In May he and his wife decided to buy Vere Lodge outright. They had leased it for some years, but did not feel as if it were really a home, a fixed *pied à terre* in Norfolk. At any time the owner might take it into his, or her, head to refuse renewal of the lease. They had begun to build a great drawing-room and a dining-room, both panelled with oak and spacious enough to hold the famous Townshend portraits. Many other improvements were made at the same time, and when completed it was one of the most charming places in the whole county. It had been built by Lord Charles Townshend, heir presumptive to the title in the lifetime of the third Marquis, who had no children, and always lived in Italy, when the Hall itself was occupied by a French *émigré*, and was situated almost at the gates of the Hall itself.

He also had another reason for wishing to have a place of his own where he could sit down and work comfortably at his writings. He was just then engaged in correcting the proofs of his book, "My Campaign in Mesopotamia," and he had, moreover, outlined and partly written another book to be named "The Gateway of Canada," dealing with the military conquest of Canada from the French—a subject always very dear to his heart. This book was only finished just before his death, and has not yet been published.

Some of the portraits purchased at the Raynham sale in 1904 by Count Cahen D'Anvers, Townshend's father-in-law, had been housed at his estate at Champs near Paris. They were now sent over to Raynham to be hung in the new rooms.

But he still hankered after the House of Commons,

and much correspondence ensued with Sir Reginald Hall and Leslie Wilson on the subject. Of course he was impatient as usual: he did not see why he should wait three or four years: he was not a new-comer to the House, having already sat there for some time. In further pursuit of this object, he wrote a long letter to Mr. Stanley Baldwin, the Prime Minister, which shows what Townshend considered his just claims to recognition.

On July 8th, to his great grief, his dog Spot, who had fought the Mesopotamian campaign with him, died at Vere Lodge. Spot was in all three battles under fire, and was sent home with General Melliss's dog after the capitulation of Kut. He had been ailing for some time but Townshend would not hear of his being destroyed, and kept him always near him night and day. The poor beast became so offensive that it was considered insanitary to keep him any longer, so a pious plot was carried out to inform the General that he had been found dead in the garden.

Peace was definitely arranged though not actually signed between Turkey and the Powers at Lausanne early in July.

But Peace was not quite yet. The Turks demanded that the British warships and troops should leave Constantinople the moment peace was signed.

He now again urged the Prime Minister to send him out to Kemal in order to square things.

The diary is silent on the reasons which induced him to make up his mind suddenly to pay a visit to Constantinople and Angora. Probably finance had a good deal to do with it—he had been approached on the subject of finance by Turkey. But the old restlessness, the "wanderlust" that was always fermenting in him, and also perhaps the assurance he would get a warm welcome from all his Turkish friends had much influence on his decision. He started on September 8th, and was joined, accord-

ing to arrangement, by the financial agent at the Gare de Lyons in Paris: they continued the journey together.

Arrived at Constantinople, his first call was on Adlan Bey, the Governor of the city, whom he had previously met in Angora.

. . . I told him I wanted to go to Angora without delay and pay my respects to H.E. Kemal Pasha. He said: "Would Saturday do?" I said it would, and left my passport with him to have it visa'd for Angora. I mentioned that I thought the best way to help Turkey was a loan, and that I knew a firm who wanted to do this: their name was a very good one in London, none better, and if they inquired at the Ottoman Bank they would find everything to their satisfaction. . . . Adlan agreed with me that the idea was sound. I said that, after all, London was the only place where Turkey could get money to start its government machinery, and that could not be done with an empty cash chest.

In the afternoon, Isakh Pasha, a great friend of mine, who had brought me from Kut to Constantinople, called at the hotel and took me up in a launch as far as Therapia. . . . I saw again the house of Enver Pasha, now dead, where I used occasionally to take tea with him, now occupied by a French General. I saw Izzet Pasha's villa at Therapia, where Morland and I sometimes went out to lunch from Prinkipo. . . .

It would appear that he had wired from London to Kemal to say he was coming out, for in a telegram from Constantinople he asks for formal permission to visit Angora in accordance with his telegram from London. His Turkish friends were all delighted to see him. One of his early visitors were Espérance Devlitin and her mother, who lived

in Prinkipo and had showed him many kindnesses when a prisoner there.

*Sept. 14.* Went up to the Mosque of Mahmoud Fateh to see the ceremony of the Khalifa (no longer called the Sultan) attending divine service. . . . A company of foot guards in red formed his escort outside the Mosque, and his escort on the move was a squadron of the Imperial Turkish Hussars. The officers of H.M.S. *Iron Duke* (Jellicoe's flagship at the Battle of Jutland) were there in a body looking on, and when the Khalifa's A.D.C. invited me into the Mosque, I asked that the naval officers might come along also and this was granted. . . .

Djemil Bey, a naval officer who was attached to me on my last trip to Angora has turned up and fastened himself on to me to go to Angora and back. . . .

Khalil Pasha, his adversary at Ctesiphon and Kut, heard of Townshend's arrival in Turkey and wired to him from Smyrna:

*Serait heureux vous recontre prière cabler rendezvous amitiés Khalil Pasha.*

He paid a visit to Prinkipo, perhaps more as a matter of sentiment, walked round his house where he had been a prisoner and looked over the wall dividing it from the road!

At the Hotel Splendide he met a Turk, Raafat Pasha, a former acquaintance, who took him to the Club to lunch, which he allowed Townshend to order and pay for! There he saw an Egyptian Princess he knew and two other ladies ("young and beautiful") and their respective husbands, and they all told him how much beloved he was by all the Turks.

On the 17th, he left for Angora, and as usual has

much to say about the horrors of railway travelling in Turkey, where everything was filthy, myriads of flies swarmed and the carriages were crowded to excess.

At Angora he was met at the station by Ismet Pasha's secretary, by whom he sent a letter to Ismet informing him as to the business on which he was in Angora, and that there was a very rich firm of financiers ready to make a loan to Turkey, but that he must have some kind of an answer by return as he was leaving again for England in a couple of days.

A Cabinet Council was in session when Townshend arrived at Angora. This involved much delay in getting a reply to his letters.

Kemal Pasha, whom they now called "Monsieur le President," was not able to see Townshend before his departure, as his stay was so short. Ismet himself had left a Cabinet Council on purpose to have a talk with him, but he recognised he had to return soon.

Ismet Pasha professed to be very keen that Townshend should be appointed ambassador to Turkey when the Peace had been ratified, and assured him he could count on his support. He might tell Lord Curzon and Mr. Baldwin at once that the Turks were anxious to have him officially in Constantinople. He even went so far as to say that to have Townshend as ambassador would mean everything as regards good relations between Turkey and England.

The journey back to Scutari was a most uncomfortable one; at the rate of eleven or twelve miles an hour only. The train was so crowded that Townshend had to give up his compartment at Ismid to some Turkish ladies ("three of them very pretty") who had nowhere to sit.

An Englishman who was interested in the

matter of the loan, was much damped by the coolness of his reception by the Turkish Governor of Constantinople. He said that he had been far more warmly received in Austria and Hungary. This Townshend set down to the desperate state of finances in Austria and Hungary, where this agent tried to establish a banking business. The Turk was different, and looked upon business men as mere "box-wallahs" as they say in India.

On October 8th, 1923, Townshend was back in London and was at once plunged into the business of a renewed political career. His great wish to sit for a Norfolk constituency was not easy to arrange. Richmond (Surrey) wanted him also, yet there seemed to be some fatality against his getting a chance at either place. The General Election was announced for December 6th, and there is little doubt that Townshend would have stood a chance second to none in one of the Norfolk contests. But he was destined never to sit in Parliament again. His throat had recently shown signs of great weakness, and the doctors absolutely forbade the exertion which would be entailed by the necessary canvassing and speeches.

He was a broken old man, old really before his years actually entitled him so to be called. His mercurial temperament and the incessant worry of struggling against all those whom he firmly believed to be responsible for the termination of his military career, combined to give the finishing touches to the break-up of a constitution naturally strong, but much weakened by the terrible strains and privations he had undergone in Mesopotamia.

Early in January, 1924, he was cheered by the news of the birth of a grandchild. There was little else to cheer him. He must have felt that the end was not far off, though up to the last, like the sturdy fighter he was, he never gave in.



## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE LAST DAYS OF A SOLDIER'S LIFE

ON Townshend's return from Turkey his wife recognised how really ill he was. He spent the winter of 1923-24 on the Riviera in the vain hope that a real rest in that wonderful climate might bring him back to health. It is very likely that neither he nor his wife did realise the extent of his malady. They planned to return to England early in June, 1924, and were making all sorts of schemes for his re-entry into Parliamentary life.

It was not to be. Serious spinal disease brought on by war strain (and doubtless by mental strain as well) developed so quickly that he was brought back to Paris at the end of April to be under the care of a noted neurologist.

The last entries in his diary are pathetically indicative of the broken state of the man. He who used to write interminably long paragraphs every day was now reduced to scribbling a few short sentences here and there. But he never lost heart, and as usual was always thinking of other people.

*May 6.* Present to Rutter\* for having tended my kit since Raven† left on March 26.

Then the entries became fewer and more illegible still; chiefly little notes for payment of small sums owed here and there, and instructions on unimportant details.

On May 16th, he wanted to arrange a lunch either at the Cercle Union or at the Ritz with his

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\*Lady Townshend's maid.

†Townshend's personal servant.

friend Sir Keith Fraser, and on that day there is an entry about the Kempton Park Jubilee, showing the keen interest he still took in sport:

I've backed Verdict for the Jubilee at 6 to 1. The price is now, I think, about 7 to 1. She is a grand mare. . . . I have asked Sir Keith Fraser to lunch with me at the Ritz.

It was evidently pointed out to him that he must not take risks: but his spirit was indomitable, for he says:

"Je serai *All Right*."

And these were the last words he ever wrote. On the day following the lunch at the Ritz, while out for his usual morning drive, he was seized with complete paralysis of the throat. His condition rapidly became worse and he died at midnight. And who shall not say that he died of a broken heart?

There was a funeral service at the church of the British Embassy in Paris, at which the British Ambassador, Lord Crewe, attended in person with his two military attachés. The body was then brought home to Raynham to be finally laid to rest in the little churchyard near his own home.

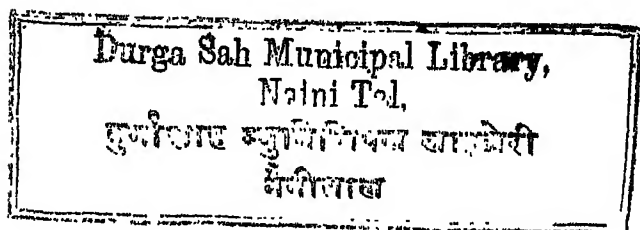
The Government were not represented in any way—neither by the War Office, nor the India Office, nor the Admiralty, under which he had begun his long career of public service. The Foreign Office rested content with having been represented at the service in Paris; but General Sir William Hamilton, a very old friend, came from the other end of England, and Earl Haig was represented by an officer from the Headquarters of the British Legion.

Perhaps the absence of official representatives did not really matter. The soldiers—the men who had fought with him and worshipped him even in the

midst of the dreadful sufferings of Kut, and their consequent imprisonment, arrived in crowds to pay (as they would have said) "their last respects." Ex-soldiers walked miles from distant villages to be there. His coffin was borne shoulder high from the church to the grave by non-commissioned officers and privates of the Norfolk Regiment who had been with him in Kut.

Probably all for whom he really cared were there, including many members of the theatrical world he had loved so well. The rest did not matter.

The Bishop of Thetford, in his address after the ceremony, spoke of him as a great man and a soldier, and ended with the quotation from Bunyan: "So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side." As assuredly they might for this man who had ever striven to do his duty.



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